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"A Tiger and a Sleeping Leopard" by George Stubbs, an engraving of 1788 included in the major retrospective of Stubbs' work at the Tate Gallery until January 6 next year (and subsequently to be seen at the Yale Center for British Art from February 13 to April 7, 1985) reproduced in its catalogue (248pp. Tate Gallery, £21.00 net, ISBN 0 90 046390 125). This exhibition will be reviewed in a feature of the TLS.

More recently there have been laudable efforts, in part successful, to re-read Henry James's fiction as enacting a "pragmatic" or "phenomenological" rhythm, a kind of narrative stuttering, akin to and perhaps handed down from his brother William's philosophical procedures. Now, Howard M. Feinstein, Professor of Psychology at Cornell University, argues that William James became whatever he did become almost entirely out of the fierce and manifold dynamics of family life over three generations.

The work reflects years and prodigies of research. No slightest stone, so far as one can make out, was left unturned; it is a big undertaking, from which the most avid Jacobite will have something to learn. Professor Feinstein's thesis takes him back to the founder of the American branch, William James of Albany so called, the penniless Irish immigrant whose intricate financial dealings in upstate New York made him, at his death in 1832, one of the two or three richest men in the country. This William's sometimes shady transactions are here sorted out for the first time; and Feinstein also, if not quite so lucidly, follows the history of the grandfather's will and its harsh, Presbyterian and, as it turned out, non-legal attempts to delay or forbid his heirs' inheritance.

The author places on view for us more than two dozen sketches by the titular William between 1859 and 1873, most of them never before made visible, and all of them, as will be noted, of main importance to Feinstein's argument. No less illustrative of that argument is the moving five-page "Family Album" he has laid out: photographs of Henry James Senior, his wife Mary, and their five children (for the younger brothers Wilky and Bob, Civil War soldiers and post-war wanderers, have their part to play too in this family story), as they aged, grew and changed from the 1850s to the 1890s.

Though it glances ahead to the philosopher's later career, *Becoming William James* ends, effectively, with William coming back to America from Europe in 1874 at the age of thirty-two, ready to take up an appointment to teach physiology and anatomy at Harvard and convinced that he was at last "in a permanent path", with a long-range plan fixed in his mind, and feeling "uncommonly strong". The substance of Feinstein's biographical study is the slow process by which, through anguish and illness and a hundred indecisions and revisions, William arrived at that stage.

The complex central thesis, or structure, has been thoroughly thought out and powerfully argued. I must attempt a short summary, though it will be woefully inadequate. The dark drama began when William of Albany cut the third of his six surviving sons, the one who would be known as Henry Senior, out of any share in his 3 million-dollar estate; and this because young Henry had misbehaved at nearby Union College, had fled the same for a period and later had flouted his father's desire that he study law. The testamentary treatment, Feinstein believes, was a source of lifelong shame for Henry. It gave him an image of himself as "a rejected prodigal", and provided the enabling parable for the whole of Henry Senior's philosophical and religious vision, worked out in a dozen abstruse treatises amounting to an "ideology for a prodigal".

In Act II, we are in the late 1850s and early 1860s. Henry Senior is married and the father of five; the family home is in Newport. The brilliant and lively oldest child, William, is keen to pursue a career in painting and shows signs of real talent. But the father, oddly imitating his parent, moves to thwart his son's ambition and sends him in another direction. "Despite his liberal protestations", Feinstein writes, "Henry was determined to force William into science, no matter how strongly his son felt a painter's calling." In the spring of 1861, Henry Senior put a stop to William's apprenticeship in a Newport studio, and an end

## The knower as actor

R.W.B. Lewis

HOWARD M. FEINSTEIN  
*Becoming William James*  
347pp. Cornell University Press. \$24.95.  
0 8014 1617 5

Informed discussion of the several illustrious Jameses continues apace, and has now grown into something like a permanent feature of the American cultural scene, one of the ways by which that scene declares itself. The development in Jamesian studies has been from individual biographies which established the lives and identities - of the philosopher William by Gay Wilson Allen, the novelist Henry by Leon Edel, and their sister Alice by Jean Strouse - to works that explore patterns of relation between family members, between parents and children and among the siblings. F. O. Matthiessen handsomely led the way in this regard, with his *The James Family* of 1947 (re-issued not long since), an anthology of the family's writings with searching interstitial commentary.

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But William's yearning towards art did not abate; and the consequences for him, wrenched between filial duty and personal longing, were disastrous. For a decade and more he suffered a series of physical and nervous illnesses, and for several years succumbed to near invalidism (Feinstein is especially perceptive about this). He could stick to nothing. He left Harvard medical school to join an expedition to Brazil and try his hand at zoology; and departed a second time to spend a year in Germany, where, between thoughts of suicide, he changed universities and courses of study by the season or the month. From Berlin in 1868, he entered into an epistolary debate with his father about metaphysics and questions of vocation. "Despite the deep affection and respect of the combatants", says Feinstein, "the duel would end tragically."

It would end, that is, in the nightmare experience - Feinstein dates it (wrongly, by my reckoning) in 1872 - undergone by William in the Cambridge, Massachusetts, family home, when he was seized and reduced to panic fear by the hallucinatory image of himself as an epileptic idiot. From that ghastly moment, William managed to inch his way back to sanity, and two years later was resuming the teaching and study of science by his own choice. Troubled times might still be in store, but William had at the least, in a later saying, become his own man and not merely his father's manipulated son. Philosophy was looming as his true interest, and somewhere in the far distance lay *The Varieties of Religious Experience* and *Pragmatism*.

It is a fascinating if almost unbelievably gloomy tale that Feinstein tells us, and I have to say that I would debate it at a number of points. In my view (that phrase should be heard accompanying most of what follows), the impact upon Henry Senior of his temporary dismemberment - he was restored to financial grace by court order in December 1836 - is greatly exaggerated. Feinstein speaks of the event as the "father's shame", his "shameful secret", something he rigorously kept hidden from his children, though "his shame is evident throughout the writings of a lifetime". But I can find few traces of any such feeling at any

time on the part of Henry Senior, nor can I see why shame should enter into it; sustained anger was the fitter and the more detectable emotion. There is no doubting that the father's cosmic vision arose belatedly from his personal experience and filial attitude; but rather from a passionate mingling of his parent and the Calvinist God than from having been stripped of his share in the property.

Henry Senior's resistance to William's artistic bent, moreover, sprang less from a hostility to art as such than from a distrust of any career choice as inhibiting the expansion of a person's being. The younger Henry, recalling the exchange about art, cited his father's "prime uneasiness" in the presence of a vocational tendency because it "dispensed with any suggestion of an alternative". Indeed and typically, when the sixteen-year-old Henry was thought to be reading too many novels, his father hurried him into a polytechnical school in Geneva; where the boy failed steadily until allowed to transfer to a literary course in the Academy. Instead of picking a single line of work, Henry Junior would put it, "What we were to do was just to be something, something unconnected with specific doing, something free and uncommitted."

Feinstein's contention that Henry Senior "threatened illness and suicide" in 1861 to blackmail William away from art and towards science strikes me as a highly inventive reading of a letter from the father to his older brother. At the same time, Feinstein demonstrates, for me beyond dispute, that William in 1859-60 was in a state of extreme turmoil, possibly about the artistic business. The demonstration takes the form of skilled, subtle analyses of sketches made by William in this period; here Feinstein (who is a practising psychiatrist) is on his own professional ground, and firm ground it is. The sketches, as he lets us see, reveal a preoccupation with abnormal and even mythic violence; with ferocity and destruction, with humans pursued and devoured by beasts and ogres, or struck dumb by wizards. They quiver with the emotions of fury and terror. This was a disturbed young man (and analysed drawings from the next dozen years show similarly intense, and contradictory impulses).

But as the decade of the 1860s went forward, the problem that really tormented William, it seems to me, was not a felt conflict between his personal aesthetic inclinations and his father's wishes. It was uncertainty about his own nature: whether he were capable of a life of

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action, or should accept the role of passive observer. In Brazil, in 1865, after reading about some adventurous explorers, he wrote to his father a bit dispiritedly: "I am convinced now, for good, that I am cut out for a speculative rather than an active life." At his worst and lowest moment on February 1, 1870, William summed up the issue in his diary: "I... perceive plainly that I must face the choice with open eyes: shall I *frankly* throw the moral business overboard, as one unsuited to my innate aptitudes, or shall I follow it, and it alone, making everything else mere stuff for it." Feinsteen misreads this passage by supposing that "The moral business" was the wilful forcing of himself in the direction defined by his sense of duty. Quite the contrary, the moral business for William James had to do with the energetic exercise of his free and individual will.

This was the entire point and thrust of the much-quoted journal entry of a couple of months later in 1870. I quote from it, perforce, selectively. After announcing that he had decided to accept the definition of free will by the French philosopher Charles Renouvier – "the sustaining of a thought because I choose to when I might have other thoughts" – William went on:

My first act of free will shall be to believe in free will. For the remainder of the year, I will abstain from the mere speculation and contemplative *Grübeleien* [ruminations] in which my nature takes delight, and voluntarily cultivate the feeling of moral freedom, by reading books about it as well as acting... Not in maxims, not in *Ausgewählte* [contemplations], but in accumulated acts of thought lies salvation... I will posit life... in the self-governing resistance of the ego to the world.

Real thinking was thus itself a mode of action – it consisted in "acts of thought" – and "moral freedom" (which was another way of saying "free will") was a cognitive phenomenon: with these determinations William found the way out of his inner wrangling. A few years later, he was identifying himself boldly in an essay about Herbert Spencer: "The knower must involve himself in the world with no foot-hold anywhere, and passively, without an order that he comes upon and finds simply existing. The knower is an actor" – the knower, in his intellectual activity, helps *make* and mould the truth about the world and man.

I would not deny for a moment that William's "problem", as here formulated, had its origins in the father-son relation. One of the most incontestable statements in *Becoming William James* is that William journeyed towards himself "within the territory defined by his father's map, guided by his own set of meanings". But what was at stake was the nature of his nature. William needed to see himself as an actor and to assert his resistant ego in the face of a father who with all vigour, and for the rescue of the soul, preached the necessary "vastation" or effacement of wilful selfhood.

To be sure, so essentially humanistic an interpretation of the matter can always be rebutted by saying that William may have believed he sought after this or intended the other, but what was actually at work was the hidden battle (generations, within Feinsteen's metaphors, are engaged in unceasing warfare) between an art-loving son and a ruthless father. It can be confessed too that others, some of my most gifted students among them, have perceived Henry Senior exactly as does Feinsteen, as a monster of selfishness and paternal shoving, a lifelong fatality to his young ones.

The latter, of course, expressed views almost entirely remote from that. "You are the same dear old god-for-nothing homebick papa as ever" was the way his daughter Alice addressed him in 1860; and Henry spoke to William in 1865 about "this pathetic, fragile inefficiency of poor Father's lifelong effort". William, in a letter read over the father's grave on the first day of 1883, said: "All my intellectual life I derive from you." But William James was the most open-minded of modern thinkers, the most receptive to differing theories and judgments. The best and truest thing one could say about the richly provocative *Becoming William James* is that William, while perhaps raising an eyebrow here and there, would have welcomed it and praised it lavishly. William recognized energy of mind when he saw it.

For this is a love story. As one (admittedly partial) witness, Millicent Todd Bingham, recorded in her diary (for March 27, 1951): "The effect on Emily? She was glad that Austin had found some comfort after his all but ruined life. In my mother's words: 'Emily always respected real emotion'." Certainly it seems as if Emily protected her brother's affair at the expense of her sister-in-law, her one-time idol, whom she had once saluted as an elemental force, fronting "the Gulf Stream", "an Avalanche of Sun!" Thirty years earlier she had seemed half in love with her, penning lyrically passionate notes to "dear Susie". Even now she admitted: "With the exception of Shakespeare, you have told me of more knowledge than anyone living



David and Mabel Todd, Amherst, 1907; reproduced from the book reviewed here.

– To say that sincerely is strange praise." But the goddess evaded her. Emily remained baffled by "Sister Sue" next door:

But Susan is a stranger yet –  
The Ones who cite her most  
Have never scaled her Haunted House  
Nor compromised her Ghost –

To play those who know her not  
Is helped by the regret  
That those who know her know her less  
The nearer they get –

(This was the kind of correspondence that passed from the Dickinson Homestead to the Evergreens before Austin's and Mabel's letters.) Now Vinnie (Lavinia) and Emily and Mabel were exchanging notes and flowers. Occasionally Mabel would play the piano and sing for Emily, but she would not see her. "My brother is with us so often each Day," Emily remarked, "we almost forgot he ever passed to a wedded Home." Austin even thought of showing Mabel's love letters to her and when Mabel was in Europe she wrote to ask her to "Touch Shakespeare for me", signing herself enigmatically "America". At her funeral Mrs Todd, her future editor, dressed in black, stood by her white coffin, strewn with violets and ground pine by Susan Dickinson.

Dickinsons apart, however, there is much else that is fascinating – such as the material recently mined by Peter Gay for his first volume of *The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud* (TLS, August 17, 1984). For over thirty years Mabel kept track of her menstrual cycle, noting her "safe" and fertile periods. She developed a code (in her diaries) to detail not only her orgasms but her husband's withdrawals at "unsafe" times which allowed her, once she had taken Austin Dickinson as a lover, to maintain regular intercourse with two men: Austin's diary, too, kept a record of full intercourse, (symbolized =). When the diaries are matched, writes Mrs Longworth, "it appears that during 1884 Mabel was making love with David an average of eight times a month, and with Austin twelve, about half of all these occasions involving full intercourse and most of those clustered during the last ten days of Mabel's menstrual cycle, which she considered her safe period." Austin had long ago ceased having sexual relations with his wife, Susan, and by the end of 1884 Mabel stopped for good her record of relations with her husband David. It seems that her relations with him nearly ceased in 1887.

But it is not clinical details alone that are of interest in this context. It is the human drama which Longworth has so skilfully unfolded. What did Mabel's husband think? What about Austin's wife and children? What about the academic community of Amherst College? How did the interested parties of such adulterers a century ago align themselves? This was no fiction by a William Dean Howells or Henry James; this, for all its self-conscious infatuation, was the real thing. Susan Dickinson, for one, was angry. She was not fooled by the use of the dining-room next door. She grew cool, withdrawn, developing a vindictive streak to humiliate a variety of harmless victims. Austin and Mabel called her the "Power", or (in mourning for her younger son) the "Great Black Mogul". David Todd, to the contrary, was starchy-eyed, chasing after eclipses on distant continents or whiling away the night at his observatory. His role was that of the permissive philanthropist, whose devotion to Mabel remained unadulterated. "My David, my David Darling!" she addressed him; they enclosed unsealed notes to each other's lovers in their letters. It seems that Austin's consummation with Mabel took place with David's concurrence. As she recorded at the time in her diary:

And all the time my dear David & I are very happy & tender & devoted companions. My married life is certainly exceptionally sweet & peaceful & satisfying. [David's] nature is just the one to soothe & rest me. I love him better all the time, and appreciate him more.

Or again: "David is superb through it all. He is a truly remarkable person." Eventually it became a *ménage à trois*, with Mabel, David and Austin spending hours companionably together. Ten times the symbol = in Austin's diary is accompanied by the notation "with a witness": all but one were Sunday evenings spent at the Todd home. Austin patronized David as "the little man" or "our mutual friend", yet the two men confided in each other and seem to have become genuinely fond of each other.

Mabel was born in 1856, the same year that Susan and Austin Dickinson were married. She arrived in Amherst soon after their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. (Her father and Austin were of exactly the same age.) Two years later she considered herself married to him, in the sight of God, and was wearing his wedding ring on her right hand. Somehow this lawyer son of a lawyer, who succeeded his father as treasurer of the College and became the pillar of his community, managed to maintain the façade of his family life without causing a scandal. It was an extraordinary feat; for his professional mask hid a sensitive, soaring soul. He was every bit Emily's brother, in fact, enacting in life what she conceived in her poetry. "You speak it most reverently – are my Christ," wrote to Mabel. "God reveals Himself to me through you, and in you. You lift me to the highest reach of my being, and in that extreme tension I thrill to your exquisite influence to the very verge of heart breaking." No wonder Mabel's mother thought Austin and his sisters cynical and irreligious people.

The publication of Emily Dickinson's poems, first and second series, was Mabel's triumph. It is she who had traced Emily's difficult hand and copied the poems on a typewriter. It was entirely her enthusiasm and social charm that coaxed so many letters from friends and relations for her to transcribe. For that alone she is owed an enduring debt. But Austin, being twice her age, predeceased her. Her public display of mourning (wearing a long cape and hat with a crepe veil about town) roused hostile comment. Austin's secret will in favour was disregarded. Even Vinnie, turned against her. Like all good soap operas, the story ends with a trial which Mabel (ignominiously and unjustly) lost. It is kinder to end by recalling her triumphant years when hand in hand with Austin, his "angel wife", she chanted in unison: "For my beloved is mine, and I am his. What can we want besides? 'Nothing!' A slip of paper, bearing the strange word: 'AMUASBTBILN' was found tucked into her diary at December 13, 1883 (the date of her consummation with Austin). Another slip, bearing the same letters, was in Austin's wallet when he died. The word is composed by alternately merging the letters of Austin's and Mabel's names.

## The Messiah of the market

John Dunn

**JOHN GRAY**  
Hayek on Liberty  
230pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £19.50.  
0 85520 710 8

Every victim of a good modern education is awash with beliefs about the condition, actual or ideal, of society. Few such victims lead lives so sheltered that they are unaware of the gaps between what is and what, in their view, ought to be. Since modern societies are so heavily governed, the most natural expression of our consequent disappointment is the proposal that the government of the society in question (or some appropriate successor) should act to impose an approved order upon the existing and deplorable disarray. Hence, to be sure, over the decades and at their respective levels, the Welfare State, Socialism and the journal *Philosophy and Public Affairs*. But hence also the riot, disruption and industrial hatred we have at present. It is not easy for even the clearest-headed to judge quite how we should see all this. One academic answer, more fashionable some decades ago, was to affect to be above it all, deploying with whatever histrionic prowess one could muster the soothing rituals of the sciences of society or linguistic philosophy. A second answer, more popular in recent years among social scientists and philosophers, has been to plunge vociferously into the maelstrom and lay on for all one is worth. Each answer has of course been adopted by now by many talented and admirable persons. But in retrospect neither of the two postures suggests a very commanding understanding of what has in fact been going on in modern history or a cogitatively very impressive conception of the role which the activity of thinking can usefully play in shaping social life.

Friedrich August von Hayek has a number of claims on current intellectual and political attention. It is the most grandiose of these claims, the claim that Hayek more than any other modern thinker has made a systematic attempt to identify the role which human thought can usefully play in shaping our social life, which furnishes the central theme of John Gray's book. Brief though it is, *Hayek on Liberty* does not quite match the terseness and lucidity of his previous study of John Stuart Mill. But it is in many ways a more engaged work: challenging, ambivalent, ultimately inconclusive, and of the most vivid interest.

In the quarter-century following the end of the Second World War it was common for British intellectuals to consider Hayek as little better than a reactionary crank, exhorting every major local step towards a more humane and civilized society. Since Mrs Thatcher came to power, he has more than his revenge – wrote to Mabel. "God reveals Himself to me through you, and in you. You lift me to the highest reach of my being, and in that extreme tension I thrill to your exquisite influence to the very verge of heart breaking." No wonder Mabel's mother thought Austin and his sisters cynical and irreligious people.

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### Short Flight

As our hypothetical flight continues and the sunset's  
Lovely slide show begins its introduction  
To the lecture of night, we can glimpse through the scrim  
Of lingerie-coloured clouds the patterns of the utopia  
We are leaving: the looms of a million Penelopes,  
The lawns, the jewelled pawnshops, lotus pools  
and libraries – all the emblematic paraphernalia of our consensus  
Shrunk to the dimensions of a sheet of foolscap.  
Then, whack, the window must be shuttered,  
For the flight attendant has announced the evening's dream.  
Which will be the one we've already seen, years ago,  
On TV, but never mind, it's free, and there is complimentary wine  
To ease our transition to where, amazingly,  
We have already arrived, home to the movies and our lives.

TOM DISCH

pull together a full explanation (and hence a full refutation) of one great overarching modern folly. We are apparently soon to be presented with a definitive statement of his conclusions: a three-volume testament, *The Fatal Conceit: The intellectual error of Socialism*. But if he learnt remarkably early what it was that he was against, and if he has held to his central judgment with an impressive tenacity, Hayek remains a deeply paradoxical thinker. It is curious, for example, as Gray himself acknowledges, for a critic of rationalist system-building to be praised for becoming a uniquely systematic liberal thinker. It is a trifle unsettling for a self-avowed pragmatist to be so intensely moralistic. It is little short of bizarre for a thinker who sees in the workings of human society both a mechanism of evolutionary adaptation and an epistemological filter to attribute so much of what he finds unwelcome in modern history to a single intellectual error. (What this last point shows most plainly is the incoherence of Hayek's conception of the relations between coercive power and the development of belief in the world today, as indeed throughout recorded history.)

What makes Hayek a thinker of major importance is not, in the end, the scope of his intellectual ambitions. A uniquely systematic attempt to understand does not guarantee a uniform degree of success in understanding. Some parts of Hayek's system go very uneasily with other parts. Some parts, even on Gray's determinedly charitable account, are extremely vague or more than a little confused in the first place: notably Hayek's interpretation of the implications of human dependence on a necessarily largely un-self-aware practical sagacity and his conception (or absence of a conception) of the precise mechanisms through which social life supposedly fosters cognitive progress and favours beliefs which converge on the truth. In contrast with this ungainly sprawl, it is in his vision of the nature and merits of the market and in his savage and imaginative assault on the whole idea of economic planning that the force of Hayek's thought lies. Here, as even some Marxist students of socialist planning have begun to acknowledge, there is something immensely important about which Hayek has proved to be essentially right and the *biens pensants* opinion of almost half a century alarmingly astray.

It is not, however, at all easy to pin down precisely what he has proved to be right about. Here Gray's open partisanship offers us little help. To claim, for example, that "we cannot graft a socialist distributional system on the stem of free market production" is simply absurd. It may in Hayek's eyes be spiritually improper to do so. It may well in most people's eyes prove in due course to be practically imprudent to have done so. But not only can we readily do so; we have in fact been doing just this for quite some time. Both as epistemological filters and as mechanisms of selective adaptation, even indeed as repositories of the tacit knowledge of their enfranchised populations, most representative democracies for

most of the twentieth century have been moving fairly steadily in this direction. True, this movement has had some massively unpopular, unintended consequences (and, because it has done so, many representative democracies, under roughly the same impulses, have recently gone some distance into reverse). But it does not take an acute political sensitivity to appreciate that this reverse movement in its turn is likely to have fairly drastic unintended consequences. And so on.

As a political project Hayek's advocacy of the market is not merely a triumphantly rationalist construction; it is also heroically, almost quixotically, extreme. Since in his eyes it is market exchange which is uniquely capable of linking human populations benignly together on the largest scale both nationally and internationally, and since in their intuitive consciousness most citizens of the modern world (as in earlier ages) regard the market's workings with suspicion and intermittent resentment, as well as with an active eye to the main chance, they must somehow be saved from themselves: forced to be free. Where Edmund Burke set himself to defend the unreflective substance of society against revolutionary doctrines of natural right, for Hayek it is the market, the great primeval contract of eternal exchange, that "is to be looked on with other reverence". But where is the reverence to come from?

Here the full forlornness of Hayek's position comes into focus. If it is hard to imagine the majority of economists coming to believe that the unmolested market is in fact best equipped to handle externalities and the supply of most public goods, it is considerably harder to see how one could rationally expect it to win the allegiance of most Western citizens in the face of their tacit (and game-theoretically irrefragable) policy of doing their utmost to have their cake and eat it – and of the bewildering variety of practices in which this policy is now embodied. The only plausible political solution, accordingly, is to arrange to have their reverence provided for them by their rulers. But even for the latter, at least in representative democracies, the policies of massive and unflinching abstention (inaction) in the face of social distress which will then be called for are likely to prove a little bleak.

It would be wonderful to identify a single intellectual error which lies behind the perils and confusions of the modern world – and even better to discover how to dispense an effective remedy for it. But any valid intellectualist theory of the source of modern ills would have to be considerably more pluralist in structure and vastly more intricate in specification than Hayek's. In truth, neither in its diagnosis nor in its remedy is his present position at all convincing. It is not epistemological error which has rendered economic planning attractive – any more than it was Cartesian rationalism that led the Pharaohs to attempt to control the Egyptian grain supply. It is not primitive sentimentality that makes most inhabitants of this country still prefer for their fellow-citizens to enjoy at least a decent minimum of welfare. Nor is the view that every form of bureaucratic planning can only do economic damage readily reconcilable with the dynamism of Japan's post-war industrial innovation. Practical skill, and indeed tacit knowledge, can take a wide variety of forms; as can human folly.

What is convincing about Hayek's views is the urgency of his warning of the potential economic costs of a naive and self-righteous *dirigisme*. But as to how wealthy commercial societies today can hope to learn efficiently and adapt effectively, this remains an intellectual problem, fusing politics with economics, to which no one at present appears to possess a very cogent solution. It is a problem which may yet bury us all.

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WILT ON HIGH



## Eastern approaches

## Iain Elliot

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Soviet Military Intelligence  
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**KGB Today: The hidden hand**  
491pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £9.95.  
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**LEO HEAPS**  
**Thirty Years with the KGB: The double life of**  
**Hugh Hambleton**  
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 176pp. Sherwood Press. £7.50.  
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Oleg Bitov's imaginative explanation for his sojourn in the West received full coverage in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, the weekly newspaper for which he had worked. Yet his responses at the Moscow press conference raised more questions than they answered. Was he kidnapped by British secret agents, or did he choose freedom only to be dragged back home by Soviet agents? Did he "defect" to carry out some task for the KGB and did he then return voluntarily?

During his absence, *Literaturnaya Gazeta* advertised a competition to mark the seventieth anniversary of the security police in December, 1987. Literary efforts and films glorifying their important work should be submitted to the Moscow Centre, Dzerzhinsky Street; winners will receive money, medals and valuable presents, but "books entered for the competition will not be returned".

The books reviewed here are written with serious intent, but fact and fiction in this funny business are so intricately interwoven that it is almost impossible to know where one ends and the other begins. The Bitov case emphasizes yet again the difficulty of distinguishing the genuine from the suspect in the testimony of defectors - but to disregard all the first-hand evidence of those who risk their life fleeing from the Soviet Union would be foolish.

The Committee of State Security (KGB) does not attempt to keep all its activities secret in the Soviet Union knowledge of its all-perva

ave presence makes the maintenance of party control much easier. Consult a Soviet dictionary about the rival GRU, however, and one might think it had something to do with geological exploration. But the acronym stands also for *Glavnoe razvedyvatelnoe upravlenie*, the Chief Intelligence Directorate of the Soviet General Staff.

Both organizations run spy rings in the West and Moscow is offering no prizes to those who reveal the secrets of such operations. The GRU defector who uses the pseudonym Viktor Suvorov was condemned to death for "betrayal of the homeland", but he himself insists that the real traitors are the men in the Kremlin. *Soviet Military Intelligence* was originally written to advise the Western security services which still provide Suvorov and his family with protection; it is more of a manual on how the GRU operates than an autobiographical account. Although it lacks the personal anecdotes which would make it a best-seller, it does

After participating in the "liberation" of Czechoslovakia in 1968 Suvorov had an offer from the GRU which he could not refuse. Most GRU officers are proud of their role in strengthening their country's defences by discovering the military secrets of potential enemies.

who were as successful as Zhou Enlai in mastering this subtle discipline. It enabled him to become adept at survival. There was no limit to his willingness to compromise. Once, when the Communists had to co-operate again with the Nationalists, a local Party cadre rebelled against this shameful fraternization with fascist butchers, and indignantly asked Zhou: "Should we become mere concubines?" Zhou coolly replied: "If necessary, we should become prostitutes." Yet he was not seeking survival for survival's sake: he survived in order to win. He combined utter fluidity with absolute resilience, like water, which espouses instantaneously the shape of whatever container it happens to fill, and never surrenders one atom of its own nature – in the end, it always prevails. The contrast between the post-humous fates of Mao and Zhou is illuminating in this respect. Mao's mummy was left to rot in a huge and grotesque mausoleum at the heart of Peking, as if better to witness from this vantage point the dismantling of all his policies. As for Zhou, he once more vanished into thin air – quite literally this time, since he wisely requested that his ashes be scattered over the country – and beyond death, it is still he who is ruling over China, through his own hand-picked successors.

Zhou made history for half a century and wielded enormous power over one quarter of mankind; yet he apparently never succumbed to the temptation of self-aggrandizement and the lust for supremacy to which none of the other Chinese leaders remained immune. He withstood countless trials, crises, humiliations and dangers, he repeatedly served, with stoic loyalty, leaders who had neither his ability nor his experience – and yet he never wavered in his commitment to Chinese Communism. Where did he derive his spiritual strength from? What motivated him? Like many bourgeois intellectuals of his generation, in his youth he was fired by intense patriotism; in his early twenties, while in Europe, he seems to have identified the salvation of China once and for all with the victory of Communism. We know nothing more about his spiritual evolution. Zhou's enigma was thus compounded by a tragic paradox: this man who generously dedicated himself, body and soul, to the service of China, ended up as the staunchest pillar of a régime that managed to kill more innocent Chinese citizens in twenty-five years of peace than the combined forces of all the foreign imperialists in over one hundred years of endemic aggression.

There are three basic books on Zhou Enlai—two in English, one in Chinese. Kai-yu Hsu's *Chou En-lai: China's grey eminence* (1968) is the earliest and most readable; although the book is marred in the end by its maudlin style, Hsu performed a remarkable work of detection in tracking down and interviewing Zhou's surviving relatives, old schoolmates and other acquaintances. This enabled him to write the most detailed account we have of Zhou's youth and early activities. Li Tien-min's *Chou En-lai* (Taipei, 1974) is dry and terse, concerned less

capacity for friendship are evident in her accounts both of these interviews and of encounters with more ordinary Chinese in her life as a student. Some of her most

ings were with victims of the Cultural Revolution. She writes of these survivors that they are not burdened by any sense of unprecedented suffering, rather they see their experiences as part of a long history of turmoil and contradiction. Her discussion goes far to explain why so many of them have preserved at least a measure of idealism of faith. Despite her expertise, Schwarz is an essentially modest observer. Faced with the complexities of Chinese society, she is always ready to alter her preconceptions. On one important occasion early in her stay, embarrassed by her limited Chinese, she took refuge in polite commonplaces rather than risking making a fool of herself by attempting a real conversation. In her journal she is ashamed of this nervousness but frank about it. Her book constantly informs, but her tone is never didactic.

A common shortcoming of these three works was that they were very sketchy on the post-1949 period and could not touch at all of Zhou's dramatic final years. There should be room, if not necessarily for a new biography, at least for a monograph that could update these earlier studies. I am not sure that Dick Wilson's book fills the gap. The author probably did not even nurture such an ambition: as his title modestly implies, this biography is merely concerned with story-telling, not with history-writing. The first half of the book is somewhat enough, as it essentially reduplicates its excellent predecessors; but it is not very useful either: what is the point of rewriting Kai-yun Hsu's work? The reader might as well refer directly to the original. (In at least one place, Wilson errs when paraphrasing an anecdote taken from Hsu's book. He unaccountably attributes to Zhou words actually pronounced by Shao Lizi (p 81). Hsu's anecdote – also found in Yan – becomes nonsensical when retold by Wilson, who misunderstood its actual import.)

Yet, in all fairness, it must be said that Wilson also makes some pertinent and useful references to sources which were not available to Zhou's earlier biographers. Whenever he leaves his three guides, however, he is treading on dangerous ground: at one point for instance, producing a double anecdote that seems rather fanciful, he refers to a Japanese source, itself quoting a Chinese source (*Nishikawa* citing *He Changgong* – twice). Had Wilson bothered to check directly with the Chinese source, he would have found that the two Japanese quotations were bogus.

The second half of the book (covering the post-1949 period) is disappointing: it amounts to little more than an enumeration of Zhou's public appearances. There is no real understanding of the complex dynamics of the various political struggles that took place during this eventful and dramatic era. One single example should suffice to illustrate how, as a result of Wilson's confused perception, history is being stood on its head: "Liu Shaoqi's pragmatism seemed dangerous to Zhou Enlai, because Liu appeared to be ready under the twin pressures of economic hardship and bureaucratic conservatism to let socialism go altogether." Many years ago, some twelve-year-old Red Guards earnestly believed, for one long hot summer, that Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping were actually bent on liquidating socialism and on restoring capitalism. That, in 1984 (Deng Xiaoping *reigns!*), there can still be respectable China specialists to entertain such notions, should be a cause for endless wonderment.

in making himself understood. He has visited some interesting places and had he stuck to describing what he saw he might have produced a better book. Unfortunately his descriptions are interspersed with stale and often ill-informed accounts of China's history, economy and society. Although he shares with many English travellers a tendency to see people of other cultures as essentially comic, Balingall is quite well-disposed towards the Chinese. If it, appears, only through ignorance that he makes such frequent use of the word "Chinaman", a term which the *OED* rightly warns is derogatory.

*All Under Heaven* is a remarkably beautiful book of photographs of the historical, cultural and natural worlds of China from the Gobi Desert to the lush subtropical south. The commentary provides a competent explanation of the images which draw the reader's attention. The high price of the book is matched by the high quality of the reproductions.

freer, more prosperous life of Japan, added to Levchenko's disillusionment and led him to defect. The KGB needs clever, sensitive agents like Levchenko, but they are precisely the most likely to react against the evils of the system and defect, while corrupt officers like his boss, Vladimir Pronnikov, who falsely denounce their own colleagues, are promoted.

He provides a detailed and comprehensive account of the GRU administrative structure. More than five thousand senior officers control a vast network of undercover officers and agents operating in every country of the world. The sixteen military districts of the USSR, the Soviet forces in East Germany, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and the Northern Pacific, Black Sea and Baltic fleets all have their own intelligence directorate subservient to the GRU. Each directorate runs an espionage network in its target countries and controls a sabotage organization known by the abbreviation *Spetsnaz*, which includes an entire brigade of 1,300 élite troops specially trained for operations behind the lines. Britain is a major objective of the Northern Fleet intelligence. According to Suvorov, just as the security police of Cuba and East European satellites are controlled by the KGB, their military intelligence comes under the GRU.

He disputes the conclusion of several Western writers, including John Barron, that the GRU is controlled by the KGB, arguing that the Communist Party Central Committee follows the well-tested precept of "divide and rule", preferring to have two separate sources of clandestine information. Since 1963 the head of the GRU has been General Petr Ivashutin, a former KGB officer who, despite repeated confrontations with Yury Andropov, held on to his post when the latter moved from the KGB to the supreme post; Ivashutin still enjoys the support of the military and industrial chiefs.

Suvorov speaks and writes with conviction and his account of the GRU seems basically sound. However, not every detail is based on his own experience and he naturally does not reveal his sources for some of his information.

In his second major work on the KGB, John Barron again concentrates on espionage operations abroad rather than the equally important KGB function of preserving party authority at home. Unlike Suslov, he cites his sources, but, with the commendable intention of making his book entertaining as well as instructive, he does not always warn his readers that an incident which makes a good story may not be the best source.

not actually be true. *KGB Today* opens in Moscow with Yury Andropov meeting the Canadian professor, Hugh Hambleton, for a cosy chat over a glass of wine to discuss espionage operations. "Who was that guy?" Hambleton asks. His controllers tell him, and he tells Barron, who then tells us that Andropov "took time from his weighty duties to personally attend to someone really important, a visiting spy." Yet Hambleton, now in a British prison, is a self-confessed liar, a man with an inflated sense of his own importance who appears to have betrayed Nato secrets with as little compunction as he deceived his women.

He evidently gave a different account to his friend Leo Heaps, who tells his story in *Thirty Years with the KGB*. There are glaring discrepancies, not least in the description of "Andropov" — Barron says, correctly, that he is tall. Heaps (that he is "short"). From sources like these come such historical facts as Andropov's fluent English and high level of culture. Barron gives us the tearful farewell dialogue between Hambleton and his Yugoslav girlfriend, waving away from terminal cancer. The Heaps account, published later, has her laughing at the way to the bank, outstripping a breathless British journalist. Although Heaps gives a fuller version of the Hambleton case, Barron is much more comprehensive in describing recent KGB operations and adds much of importance to his *KGB: The secret work of Soviet secret agents* (1974), appending, for example, some 300 names to his earlier impressive list of exposed Soviet agents.

Barron tells of Stanislav Levchenko, who worked openly as a Soviet correspondent in Tokyo while secretly subverting Japanese politicians and journalists, thus recruiting agents of influence and spreading disinformation. At an even deeper clandestine level, the contrast between the closed society of the Soviet Union and the open society of the United States is starkly revealed. The Soviet Union is repressive, corrupt and inefficient - and the

Barron describes too the economic and social difficulties facing the USSR and the phenomenal efforts expended to obtain advanced technology from the West. These chapters will be criticized by specialists as too negative and as occasionally inaccurate in detail, but his general conclusions are difficult to fault because of the sheer weight of evidence produced. Soviet espionage recovers its costs many times over through savings on research and development. By purchasing or stealing Western technology the Soviet Union is able to pose an even greater military challenge. Defectors such as Suvorov confirm this reasoning.

Another defector, Anatoly Golitsyn, seems determined to have the very real threat of KGB disinformation dismissed as fantasy by greatly distorting its extent. He argues that Soviet splits with Yugoslavia, Albania, Romania and even China were deliberately staged by the Kremlin to mislead the West; that the Prague Spring, the dissident movement in the USSR, and Eurocommunism were likewise products of KGB disinformation. Golitsyn alleges, but of course cannot prove, that almost every development reported about the communist world, from Sakharov to Solidarity, is suspect. He succeeds only in casting doubt on the information he himself supplied when he defected in 1961; yet this proved of the highest value at the time. As with all defectors, it is vital to distinguish between what he knows from first-hand experience, what is the result of careful analysis of available sources and what, like most of Golitsyn's book, is sheer guesswork. Richard H. Shultz and Roy Godson in *Dezininformatsia* provide a much more convincing study of the role of disinformation in Soviet strategy. They carefully document Moscow's attempts to manipulate world opinion through agents of influence, international front organizations and by planting forgeries on the often too susceptible media.

František August served in the Czechoslovak security and espionage organization (STB) from 1949 to 1969. He defected to Beirut where he had been posted as a major in the STB under the cover of Third Secretary at the Czechoslovak Embassy. His career provided first-hand material for this valuable inside account by František August and David Rees of how Moscow's control of a satellite country is perpetuated by Soviet agents infiltrating into the party and security police leadership. The description of the relationship between the KGB and the STB is particularly interesting, especially in explaining the thorough Soviet preparations to crush the Prague Spring. From 1961 to 1963 August was posted to the London Embassy from which he helped run Czechoslovak espionage rings in Britain. He was spotted by MI5 which, in a gentlemanly way, over whiskies in a suburban pub, attempted to recruit him.

Penn Kimball's distressing experience might at first glance serve to confirm those who believe that Western security services are little better than the KGB. Thanks to the Freedom of Information Act this distinguished American journalist and academic, who has served on the staff of prominent politicians, discovered in 1978 that since 1946 the US State Department had him listed as a possible security risk because of his stand on trade-union rights. Both the FBI and CIA kept files based largely on unsubstantiated allegations by people who either did not know him well, or did not like him; positive comments were ignored in the final draft entered in his dossier.

Kimball was thus excluded from government work - particularly serious when he was briefly unemployed with a wife and daughter to support; he believes that he was even refused a Fulbright scholarship because of the file. The issues he raises are important and stirred up much healthy debate in the United States. The other books reviewed here demonstrate clearly the need for security vetting. Kimball shows that it should be done more efficiently.

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1. *Chlorophyll a* and *Chlorophyll b* contents were determined using a spectrophotometer.



# A city built on sand

S. S. Praver

LUCJAN DOBROSYCKI (Editor)  
The Chronicle of the Lodz Ghetto, 1941-1944  
Translated by Richard Lourie, Joachim  
Neugroschel and others  
619pp. Yale University Press. £25.  
0300 03208 0

And now you will ask: what about resistance? Do the heroes assemble in the shoe-factory, perhaps, or on the goods station - some of them at least? Have they discovered, at the southern perimeter which is least overseen and therefore least easy to guard, some dark canals through which arms might be smuggled into the ghetto? Or are there, in this wretched town, only hands that do exactly what Hardjoff and his guards demand of them? - Condemn them, go on, condemn us all; it is true, there were only hands of that kind. Not a single shot was fired in justice; order and tranquillity were strictly preserved; not a hint of resistance. I am bound to say it: I believe there was no resistance. I am not omniscient, but my statement is based, as they say, on probability bordering on certainty. Had there been anything, I would most surely have noticed it.

The ghetto which the narrator of Jurek Becker's *Jacob the Liar* here recalls is not named; but there are many indications that it is based on the ghetto the German invaders set up in the Polish city of Lodz during the Second World War. There the situation differed radically from that in the Warsaw ghetto, his experience of which Roman Polanski's autobiography has recently described in detail. Soon after Poland had been overrun, the city of Lodz - the "Manchester of Poland", centre of a great textile and clothing industry, home to some 250,000 Jews - became part of the *Reichsgau Wartheland*, an administrative unit incorporated into Hitler's Reich. It was renamed Litzmannstadt, and subjected to intense Germanization and Nazification. "The Polish population", Lucjan Dobroszycki reminds us,



Rumkowski, "the Elder", officiating at a wedding ceremony; reproduced from the book reviewed here.

whose number fluctuated from around 396,000 in 1940 to around 343,000 in 1944, was thrust into the role of parish. The city had been almost entirely pacified. This the occupiers achieved by means of terror, constant surveillance, and the expulsion of undesirable elements, and by depriving the Polish population from certain districts of the city including those in close proximity to the ghetto. And thus there arose a sort of no-man's land between the Jewish quarter and the "Aryan" part of the city. Ultimately, a ghetto Jew could cross the fence but there would be no one waiting on the other side to serve him as a guide, supply him with the necessary papers, and provide him with initial accommodations, irrespective of motive or principle, for money or not. It is a fact that, apart from one very special and singular case, there is no record thus far of any Jewish family or individual surviving the war in Lodz by being on "Aryan" territory, as occurred in Warsaw, Cracow, Lodow, Lublin, and many other Polish cities. The Jews in the Lodz ghetto were indeed cut off as nowhere else.

One of the consequences of this state of affairs was that the Germans were able to prevent news from outside reaching the ghetto more effectively, and for a longer time, than elsewhere; and the truth about their extermination policy; even where it was picked up by an occasional rumour - and the ghetto, as readers of *Jacob the Liar* will know, was full of rumours - or even by a clandestinely overheard radio broadcast, remained hidden from its designated victims for longer than one would have thought possible. How could they believe that inhumanities on that scale would be tolerated even in Hitler's Europe? How could they fail to believe that by bowing their heads, fulfilling their work-quotas for Speer's slave-labour economy, trying to mitigate the effects of harsher and harsher decrees by pleading, negotiation, dodges of every kind, they would weather out this storm as Jewish communities had weathered out so many others? That, certainly, was the view of the "Elder of the Jews" designated by the Germans, and by the committees within the ghetto who reinforced and carried out his policy of fulfilling German demands with the minimum of hurt and damage. Again and again we find the "Elder" able to wring out some small concession in return for submission in what the Germans regarded as essential; until in the end it is he and his Jewish committees and police force who not only register but also select men, women and children for "resettlement" - one of many euphemisms whose full force we can appreciate today more easily than these desperate men clutching at every straw of hope. Even before the extermination camps of Kulmhof (Chelmno) and Auschwitz had been primed for the infamies of the "Final Solution", the fate of the ghetto into which Jews from Lodz, from other Polish towns and villages, and from the German heartland, were driven, had been effectively sealed. There was to be no place for Jews in Litzmannstadt; one way or another the city was to be Germanized entirely, the ghetto-buildings were to be razed, and a suburb for German inhabitants was to be built on the site, dominated by a magnificent centre for the National German Workers Party. But this the Elder of the Jews did not know when he and his committees decided on their policy, rammed home in speech after speech, of persuading the Germans, by the excellence of the goods delivered to them from factories and workshops within the ghetto, that Jews were useful citizens whose lives deserved to be made tolerable, even in Litzmannstadt. Those of us who were spared the kinds of decision such men had to make are in no position to pass judgment on them.

which personalize the chronicle, make the statistics live in a way impossible by other means. The Chronicle begins on January 12, 1941, and breaks off on July 30, 1944. When the Russians arrived in Lodz later that year they found only 877 Jews of the tens of thousands who had passed through the ghetto. But the archive, hidden from the Germans, was found - and it included a copy of the Chronicle, whose English version Lucjan Dobroszycki has edited, introduced and annotated. Since Dobroszycki is also the co-author of *Image before my Eyes: A photographic history of Jewish life in Poland 1864-1939*, it will surprise no one to find that the texts he has included are supplemented by an excellent selection of the moving photographs of ghetto life and destitution taken, often at considerable risk, by M. Grossman and others for the ghetto archives and hence for posterity.

It was impossible to include the whole Chronicle even in so substantial a volume as this. What we are given is about a fourth of the whole text, helpfully introduced and anno-

tion of all synagogues, the shootings and public hangings, the mental breakdowns and suicides, the mass registrations and deportations - all this is brought home to us with powerful effect by the unexaggerated, muted way in which the chroniclers set down their terrible facts. Inevitably they record moments of hope, moments of play, moments even of joy; but these are only moments, and they leave the surrounding gloom darker still. No less inevitably the record also includes, right up to the end, instances of gallows humour and of bitter Jewish wit. No aspect of ghetto life, or of ghetto death, goes unrecorded here, from hard - all too hard - news to the most fantastic rumours, from the hunger for books and writing materials to work on the latrines, from recitals by virtuosos once famous in an outside world that had put up with their disappearance behind the ghetto walls to the activities of petty criminals with colourful Yiddish names. The sufferings of the German Jews, accustomed to venerate German cultural achievements, accustomed to obey to the letter laws promulgated by duly constituted authority, often wholly estranged from Judaism, becomes clear in detail after detail faithfully reported in the Lodz Chronicle after some 20,000 newcomers arrived in the autumn of 1941.

They arrived here in long lines, festively-attired people whose appearance contrasted so sharply with our native squalor. We were struck by their elegant sports clothes, their exquisite footwear, their fur, the many variously colored capes the women wore. They often gave the impression of being people on some sort of vacation or, rather, engaged in winter sports, for the majority of them wore ski clothes. You couldn't tell there was a war on from the way those people looked; and the fact that, during the bitter cold spells, they strolled about in front of the gates to their "transports," and about the "city" as well, demonstrated most eloquently that their lapses of fat afforded them excellent protection from the cold.

Barely six months later we meet the same figures again:

Some of the metamorphoses could not be imagined, even in a dream. . . . Ghosts, skeletons with swollen faces and extremities, ragged and impoverished, they now left for a further journey to which they were not even allowed to take a knapsack. - They had been stripped of all their European finery, and only the Eternal Jew was left. . . .

Some 2,000 of these arrivals came from one of the oldest of all Jewish settlements in German lands, from Cologne and the Rhineland. It is only an accident of history, a concatenation of a number of fortunate circumstances which no one had any right to expect, that the writer of this review, who fled to England from Cologne just before the doors slammed shut in 1939, was not among that sad troop whose journey ended at Chelmno or at Auschwitz.

The history of the Jews of Lodz before the Second World War will be vividly present in the minds of many readers, even if they have never visited that city or encountered members of that doomed community, because of its personalization in one of the masterpieces of Yiddish literature: Israel Joshua Singer's *The Brothers Ashkenazi*, translated by Maurice Samuel and again, more recently, by Joseph Slinger. No one who has ever read that novel will forget its closing lines, written in 1935, when all of Jewish Lodz - a city built on sandy soil and reached by sandy roads - comes to the funeral of the central protagonist, Max Ashkenazi:

The grave-diggers had prepared a small grave, as if for a child. A stranger recited over the coffin the Kaddish which Max Ashkenazi's son should have recited. Strangers threw the first handfuls of earth into the open grave.

"Dust thou art, to dust thou returnest, and all that is in thee is earth," they murmured. A thick mist had descended from the skies over Lodz. A wind rose and blew the dust of the cemetery in the eyes of the mourners. Heavily and slowly, like the rolling mists above them, they turned back to the desolate and alien city.

"Sand", they muttered, covering their eyes with their hands. "Everything we have built was built on sand."

The evening came on with swift strides. In the black sky above the mourners a flock of birds flying in half-moon formation passed with shrill cries. The name "Ashkenazi" is symbolic - "Ashkenaz" is the Jewish name for the region that includes Germany and Poland; and *The Chronicle of the Lodz Ghetto*, in its sober yet unforgettable vivid fashion, tells all the world what foreboding lay in the cries with which Slinger ended his book just two years after Hitler had seized power in Germany.

## A common interest

Richard Overy

JOHN TURNER (Editor)  
Businessmen and Politics: Studies of business activity in British politics, 1900-1945  
200pp. Heinemann. £18.50.  
0435 52870 0

There is an instructive anecdote in Oswald Mosley's memoirs of a meeting with Lord Nuffield shortly after the launching of the New Party. The "business genius", Mosley thought, was "lost outside his own sphere. . . . Political conversation with him tended to be tedious. However, ennuï flew out of the window when at the end of lunch he pulled a cheque from his pocket for £50,000." Money was one language they both understood. A great social and intellectual gulf divided Britain's educated political class from the captains of British industry, and John Turner has marshalled here a series of workmanlike studies which explore efforts to cross this divide in the fifty years before 1945.

This is an altogether welcome endeavour. Banking and finance now have an honourable place in discussions of politics and diplomacy throughout the period in question. Industry has been left all too often to economic historians, who are understandably more interested in measuring economic performance than poli-

tical impact. The political history of much of recent European capitalism still remains to be written. Turner offers his book as "the beginning, not the end of the road".

It is not an easy road. Discussions about business and politics immediately open up important issues of theory and method. Turner is aware of this, and arrives at a very British conclusion: nothing general can be said until all the nuts and bolts have been examined. This means rejecting from the outset the "Marxist" interpretation, with its emphasis on political forms as a function of particular economic systems. It also means rejecting what Turner calls the "corporatist" approach, a view he ascribes to a school of German political scientists and historians who have argued that industry, labour and government through mutual agreement have operated the political system in their favour, at the expense of the voters.

Empiricism is, of course, all very well. Yet it leads in this case to a rather mechanical view of what is meant by "business" and by "politics". Neither is carefully defined, or really defined at all. Business is broadly understood to mean large and medium-scale industry. It is difficult to see where this leaves small businesses, and it neglects the importance of commerce and finance and of the inter-relationships between different business forms. Nor does it tell us

ferior abilities". Indeed, the need for renewal in one sector of British industry after another comes through strongly. One of the darkest portraits is that of the dreadful Douglas-Pennant, Lord Penrhyn, who waged an unrelenting war against his labour force and the North Wales Quarrymen's Union. The defeat of the men, and their wives and children, at the hands of this appalling man left an emotional scar for generations, dividing the village families who capitulated from those who fought on to the bitter end. And how are we to judge the career of Joseph Duveen, who directed art treasures to where the money was, sending in a period of thirty years some £100 million worth of European art to North America?

Two essays perhaps stand out in terms of general interest: Barbara Smith on Sir Bernard Docker and his wife, and William Rubinstein on Sir John Ellerman. The Docker saga was real *Dynasty* material, with Bernard trying to build on to his inherited industrial empire while under the highly distracting influence of Norah, whose mother had kept The Three Tuns in Sutton Coldfield and who had been twice widowed by millionaires before she took on Bernard. He, reputed to be a shy man, found himself in the centre of a much publicized parody of the high life, made the more crass by Norah's carelessness of tongue and reputation, aggravated by too much alcohol. Her determination to gain control of Daimler produced a classic boardroom row.

Ellerman was an antithetical case: he was his own, lonely man from beginning to end, who from nothing became far and away the richest man in England, exemplifying, as Rubinstein puts it, "the purest approach to disembodied business intellect ever seen in Britain". "If any comparison suggests itself", we read, "it is to a grand master chess champion who, while appearing solitary and eccentric to others, creates masterpieces by means of continuing ratiocination against a lifelong series of opponents." His success lay in taking over firms and restoring them to efficient and dynamic performance; and his career implies, as Rubinstein suggests, that the British economy was crying out for more Ellermans.

There are also one or two tumbles into bathos, as when we read of someone who "went to Cape Colony to recuperate his glands and entered his uncle's store which specialised in ostrich feathers", or of another who was "100 yards champion of East Bengal", or of the heroic figure who in his youth "had his horse shot out from under him twice". Information on conservatism, "alternative", special interest and statutory environmental bodies is listed in *Directory for the Environment: Organisations in Britain and Ireland* by Michael J. C. Barker (281pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £8.95. 07102 0227X). A subject index is included.

## Acceptable faces

Sydney Checkland

DAVID J. JEREMY (Editor)  
Dictionary of Business Biography: A biographical dictionary of business leaders active in Britain 1860-1980  
Volume 2, D-G  
600pp. Butterworth. £65.  
0406 27342 1

It is too early, with four volumes still to come, to assess the totality of British business performance as revealed in this *Dictionary of Business Biography*, but already the outline of a picture begins to emerge. There are those figures whose net contribution was a large and undoubted plus; there are those in whom the balance was either even, or in the negative; there are the rather dull worthies of modest scale who predominate in numbers, and perhaps in aggregate impact, each meriting a page or so, who were well known in their own worlds for a few decades.

As a historian one finds oneself trying to construct a kind of balance-sheet for each contribution to the economy and society, in short to decide whether, seen in completed retrospect, a given man of business was a good or a bad thing. In a great many cases this is not easy to do, but it is a valuable exercise. The honours system is not a reliable guide: a knighthood or a peerage is no guarantee of social utility.

Great achievement is given its due here. The roll-call of the first generation of major contributors to the aircraft industry in this volume is remarkable. Some of these are *Boy's Own Paper* heroes who flew their own kites and helped to lay the basis of a real British achievement: Geoffrey de Havilland, Gerard D'Erlanger, Roy Dobson, Sholto Douglas, George Edwards, Charles Fairley, Giles Guthrie. Here too is Joseph Dent, publisher of the *Everyman* series, a truly pioneering venture, the economics of which he could never get right; and Oscar Deutsch, cinema magnate, with his chain of Odeons whose managers wore tails for the evening performance; or Edward Stanley Gibbons, stamp dealer; or Tommy deatons and alien city.

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The evening came on with swift strides. In the black sky above the mourners a flock of birds flying in half-moon formation passed with shrill cries. The name "Ashkenazi" is symbolic - "Ashkenaz" is the Jewish name for the region that includes Germany and Poland; and *The Chronicle of the Lodz Ghetto*, in its sober yet unforgettable vivid fashion, tells all the world what foreboding lay in the cries with which Slinger ended his book just two years after Hitler had seized power in Germany.

Hitler had seized power in Germany. The evening came on with swift strides. In the black sky above the mourners a flock of birds flying in half-moon formation passed with shrill cries. The name "Ashkenazi" is symbolic - "Ashkenaz" is the Jewish name for the region that includes Germany and Poland; and *The Chronicle of the Lodz Ghetto*, in its sober yet unforgettable vivid fashion, tells all the world what foreboding lay in the cries with which Slinger ended his book just two years after Hitler had seized power in Germany.

much about the rapid changes in the character of "business" over this period, though the transition from family firms to shareholders and professional managers must have affected its politics (it clearly has done so since 1945). "Politics" is also rather narrowly interpreted. Most of the essays implicitly assume that what is meant by that is the political process centred on Westminster. There is surely nothing particularly Marxist in suggesting that the political system is much larger than this, and that politics, in both a formal and an informal sense, is conducted within and between industries, or between "capital" and "labour".

Some of these questions are faced squarely in the book. In one of the best pieces George Peden argues that the distinction is a false one, that politicians, the ruling class and businessmen, although their immediate interests might be divergent, have a common set of assumptions about the political system and share the same broad social ambitions. This was evident in wartime. Businesses were then allowed to make money; politicians could control what they made, how much it cost, and what resources were used. Both sides were committed to the defence of the existing system. A belief in economic individualism and antipathy to labour were also widely shared, and indeed crop up here in almost every chapter. There is more structure and system here than the book is prepared to admit. If capitalism and class are difficult concepts to handle historically, they are also difficult to ignore.

Nevertheless the main contours of the "empirical" picture emerge clearly enough through the eight studies presented here. Businessmen found it difficult to act collectively, were shy of formal politics, except for a brief parliamentary spell after 1918, and had great difficulty in effectively penetrating the political system. Efforts to establish umbrella organizations (the Federation of British Industries or the National Confederation of Employers' Organizations) not only met resistance from industrialists, but failed to be taken

seriously enough by government. There was no corporatist compact between capital and government in the inter-war years. Industry was treated as a lobby group like any other. When government and the civil service intervened they did so on an *ad hoc* basis, often with a weather eye on the electorate, and in many cases with a profound ignorance of the industry or the economic pressures with which they were dealing. Industry itself had a poor image with the politicians, who were drawn in many cases from a quite different social and educational background. Britain's political class treated businessmen patronizingly and high-handedly.

There was, however, considerable identity of interest. Sir Warren Fisher is quoted as saying that "the supreme interest of the stockholders is the integrity of the state". What the British political system was designed to do was to provide a secure environment within which the economy could grow. Industry could also extract major concessions: decontrol after 1918; tariffs and safeguarding (although industry itself was deeply divided on protection); a minimum of direct state interference. In return, industry more than pulled its weight in two world wars.

Maintaining political stability, a secure state and sound trade and finance, met most of the requirements that British capitalism made of the state. Without them British politics might have been very different. Indeed there is powerful evidence, particularly in Turner's own article on industrial lobby-groups, that Britain, like Germany, faced the prospect of the "fragmentation of bourgeois politics". A plethora of small middle-class interest groups (the National Stability League, the Liberty and Property Defence League, etc) sprang up in the thirty years after 1900, preaching a mixture of small-business populism and moral rearmament. Without Britain's uniquely powerful ruling class with its resilient political system, and with Nuffield's £50,000 in his pocket, what might Mosley have made of it all?



"This book offers a subtle, highly sophisticated, fresh and unfavourably interesting interpretation of some central themes in Marx's thought. Agreeably undogmatic, it has much to interest non-Marxist moral philosophers, political theorists and economists." - Steven Lukes, Oxford University

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# Arbiter elegantiarum

Jonathan Keates

EDWARD CHANEY and NEIL RITCHIE (Editors)  
Oxford, China and Italy: Writings in honour of  
Sir Harold Acton  
246pp. Thames and Hudson. £18.  
0500013519

"Time", says Vernon Lee writing in *Praise of Old Houses*, "has wonderful cosmetics for its favoured ones; and if it brings white hairs and wrinkles to the realities, how much does it not heighten the bloom, brighten the eyes and hair of those who survive in our imagination!" Sir Harold Acton at eighty hardly needs such blandishments: he palpably endures, as we are reminded by a dust-jacket photograph which shows him looking what the more easily ravaged choose evocatively to call "absurdly youthful". Yet at the same moment, as one of Time's favoured ones, he survives in the imagination of those whose enthusiastic fires remain unquenched by *mal aria* of system and calculation pervading our century.

This handsome birthday present resembles one of the allegorical confections in which Baroque painters and composers celebrated their patrons. Here, for instance, is Poetry in the somewhat enigmatic form of Iris Origo, with some verses entitled "Childhood Denied". Whose childhood (surely not the indomitable Marchesa's) and what denial we cannot know, nor do these wistful lines much enlighten us on the point, but the poem offers an interlude of eloquent lyrical vagueness in the opening chorus of praise. We are not much the wiser with Sir Sacheverell Sitwell, beautifully dithering between a rhapsody on "Voi che sapete" and the implication that his old friend belongs to what Lady Louisa Stewart called "the genus mountebankum", while the late Laureate's "The silent lake through which I see / Is life and death at one in me", in an astonishing fragment scribbled during the 1920s in the garden of the Spread Eagle at Thame introduces a whiff of admonitory gloom.

Friendship figures in various guises: Joan Hadlip recalls Sir Harold clearing a Florentine restaurant with an impassioned rendering of Herod in Wilde's *Salome* (in which John Sutro had once intended him to star opposite Tilly Losch in the title role); Christopher Sykes remembers his extraordinary impact upon undergraduate Oxford and leaves us to ponder the significance of the observation that "his life can remind one forcibly of the *History of Pericles*" and many other of the works of Thackeray. And in bounces A. L. Rowe, the *terracotta* of the company, characteristically unblushing in autobiography.

We have of course been here before. Even if, pace Sykes, Evelyn Waugh's Anthony

Blanche is far more obviously modelled on the altogether less resilient figure of Brian Howard, the famous declamation of *The Waste Land* through a megaphone to the Christ Church rowing hearties is now a hallowed piece of Oxonian. The episode is best conveyed in Anthony Powell's contribution, an Aubreyan life, in which he relates as follows: *Amicus*: Mr E. Waugh (author of Hertford Coll. with whom he was often merrie in liquor. He was generally temperate in drinking, but one time, having been with his camerades, a frolic came into his head, and from his window in college he did declaim through a trumpet to those walking in Christ Church meadow verses writt by that sweet swan Mr Eliot.

A homage more lasting, in the form of a dozen densely researched essays on recondite Anglo-Italian topics, makes *Oxford, China and Italy* worthy of its object. Amanda Lillie gives us the early history of La Pietra, through an account of its association with Ghirlandajo's banker patron Francesco Sassetti, and Anna Maria Crino, examining Cosimo II de' Medici's baffled plans for marriage between various of his children and those of James I, lays bare the Grand Duke's wise proposal of a separate Ireland governed by Don Francesco de' Medici and Elizabeth Stewart, "which would still serve to maintain the said kingdom in peace . . . since the people, for the most part Catholics, as we understand, would remain tranquil under the government and dominion of this prince". John Fleming unties a bundle of letters from James Adam in Naples, busily in quest of "Antiquities" and "attack'd in flank, front and rear by six battalions of bugs and four squadrons of fleas". Hugh Honour makes us pine for the company of the quintessentially Actonian Capocelatro, Archbishop of Taranto, and there is a noble memorial of the connaisseur Baron d'Hancarville from Francis Haskell.

By such a splendid process of obliqueness, what Sir Harold represents for us, the generous communication of the pleasures of civilized experience which the eighteenth century termed "polite learning", is better caught here than in the sketches of memoir which open the book. The man, himself, not unpleasantly eludes us. Somewhere in that Chinese landscape where he was happiest, the peonies and the pagodas receive him from our sight.

Kate Flint, in her *Impressionists in England: The critical reception* (390pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £17.50, 0 7100 9470), has gathered together a wide-ranging selection of the criticism which greeted the work of the Impressionist artists in the English press, including reviews by George Moore, Walter Pater, Bernard Shaw, Clive Bell, Roger Fry and Walter Sickert. In particular D. S. MacColl and R. A. M. Stevenson are shown to have praised and promoted the Impressionists who were at first widely misunderstood for their treatment of light and distortion of form.



A detail from Rembrandt's "The Blinding of Samson", reproduced from the book reviewed below.

## Oriental imagist

John Nash

LEONARD J. SLATKES  
*Rembrandt and Persia*  
177pp. New York: Abaris Books. \$20.  
089835 241 X

Leonard J. Slatkes's thesis is that "Rembrandt apparently believed that even relatively contemporary Persian and Moghul miniatures transmitted the social customs and dress of biblical days, and he used a variety of these elements to add a note of historical veracity to his work". In the first essay, on "Samson Posing the Riddle to the Wedding Guests" (Dresden), the argument appears to be that in the late 1630s, Rembrandt also used oriental imagery in "open challenge to the classical tenets Sandrart propounded in Amsterdam at the same time". But the line of argument is heavily overlaid by miscellaneous notes on a variety of aspects of Rembrandt's complex and fascinating life and work, drawn from the packed research files which resulted from the prolonged gestation of *Rembrandt and Persia*.

Professor Slatkes proposes (among other things) that the "Blinding of Samson" (Frankfurt) was derived from a Moghul miniature; the "Woman at her Toilet" (Ottawa) is not "Esther" but "Bathsheba", the head-dress of Asenath in "Jacob Blessing Joseph's Children" (Kassel) is intended to be authentically oriental; Rembrandt must have read Josephus and Leonardo, known Jan van Hasselt, court painter to Shah Abbas I of Persia, met Joachim von Sandrart at an Amsterdam picture auction in 1639, and been the master of the Leyden painter, Philips Angel—all points worth making, but strung together like beads rather than woven into a single argument. Slatkes's most

pertinent proposal is that in quoting Leonardo's "Last Supper" in his "Samson's Wedding", Rembrandt anticipates the explicit parallel drawn between the two events by Joost van den Vondel, in his poem "Altaerghelmissen" of 1645. But Slatkes does not note how Rembrandt oddly turns the tables, not only literally, by making the wedding table subtly circular, but by putting in the place of Christ not his antetype Samson, but Samson's bride, his betrayer.

The second essay is altogether more cogent, being concerned to demonstrate that the famous painting in the Frick Collection does not represent a "Polish Rider", a "Prodigal Son" or "The Christian Knight" (all earlier suggestions), but the young David going out to slaughter the Philistines and win the hand of King Saul's daughter Michal. Slatkes's notion of an established fact is questionable, and so he can write: "Since Rembrandt's 1656 inventory also listed a complete edition of Flavius Josephus, and he had used this same work earlier, for his 'Samson's Wedding Feast', it comes as no surprise that he turned to this important source once again" (my italics). But in other respects he is scrupulous and largely convincing. He argues that the so-called "Polish" outfit of the rider has its origins in the near East and was intended by Rembrandt to be appropriate for an Old Testament hero. He notes that once again a poem by Vondel provides a parallel: his "Hymnus of Lofzangh Vande Christelyck Ridder" of 1614 sees David as an antetype of the *Miles Christianus*.

In the third, brief, essay, "Some Religious Speculations", Slatkes argues that, for various reasons, including his choice of Samson and David as subjects for his brush, Rembrandt is unlikely to have been acceptable as a member of the Mennonite sect.

## On and off the strength

Hew Strachan

MYNA TRUSTRAM  
*Women of the Regiment: Marriage and the Victorian army*  
262pp. Cambridge University Press. £22.50.  
0521 26294 1

In 1850 the readers of the *United Service Magazine* were treated (by Mrs Ward) to the lurid and enthralling adventures of Lizzy Gould. The tale of poor Lizzy was cautionary: her wayward husband had enlisted and in so doing exposed his sensitive and refined wife to the vice, coarseness and corruption of barrack-room life. The message was apparently simple—marriage and the army did not mix. Wives and children encumbered a regiment in its movements, put a burden on the soldier's income beyond that which it was designed to bear, and made demands of the Treasury in their need for housing and other material provision. There was too a psychological incompatibility, more clearly articulated in Freudian or Jungian vocabulary than in that of the Victorians. As a profession the army demanded that the soldier be—at least at times—brave and brutish, and (in the words of the *Herald of Peace* in 1858) "an useable instrument of killing". The army's reliance on "masculine" virtues, to the apparent exclusion of the "feminine", made for a tension between, not an integration of, the two elements of the personality.

However, it is a central point of Myna Trustram's argument that this was not always so. Indeed, for her, social relations, not physical or psychological factors, determine the pattern of sexual and family lives. In civil society in Britain, industrialization moved the centre of work from the family to the factory: the family ceased to be an economically productive unit, and the employment status of the wife—embodied in legislation such as the Factory Acts and the Poor Law—became distinct from, and dependent on, that of the husband. Dr Trustram sees the position of the women in the army undergoing a parallel change. In the eighteenth century, with supply and transport in civil hands, women—as sutlers, cooks, nurses, midwives, laundresses and seamstresses—were fundamental to the interior economy of a military train. But from the end of that century these ancillary tasks were progressively milita-

rized, and women confined to domestic and sexual roles.

The army's attitude to women therefore became increasingly ambivalent. Marriage on a limited scale had to be acknowledged as inevitable in a long-service army. Moreover women provided a confined but none the less vital range of services which meant that a small number could contribute to the cohesion and effectiveness of a regiment. Married soldiers proved less likely to desert, less prone to drunkenness and bad conduct, and less susceptible to disease. Since approval for marriage became a reward for good conduct, the situation was of course self-fulfilling. Those who married without approval or "off the strength" found their marriage unacknowledged and their wives excluded from any of the material benefits available to those "on the strength". Thus, Trustram argues, the army regulated the pattern of the soldier's family life. If he married "on the strength", it relieved him of responsibility for providing education, accommodation or medical care for his family. Whether his wife was "on" or "off" the strength, the soldier was (at least until 1870, and the situation was not much improved thereafter) exempt from the obligation to maintain her or their children. Family links took second place to military needs. The regiment became the soldier's family, and marriage was acceptable only in so far as it confirmed the regiment as the soldier's home.

All that Trustram has to say on this point will be instantly recognizable to a student of the Victorian army. What she argues is convincingly presented, and illuminated with remarkably apposite and well-chosen illustrations. But it suffers from a major contextual problem. Her focus is on the army at home. Although she freely acknowledges that much of the army in her chosen period was abroad, she obscures the degree to which its institutions were moulded by colonial service. The regiment became a home and family, and provided paternalistic benefits and welfare, precisely because British society was not available for most of the time to most soldiers. Rather than take the Victorian army as representative of similar trends in Victorian society, we must acknowledge that in many ways the army was distinct and separate from society. For example, Trustram attributes the higher marriage rate of the cavalry to its greater number of NCOs, but the

same phenomenon was evident in the Guards, and the cause seems far more likely to be the almost unbroken home service of these units. By contrast, line battalions spent more time abroad (although the 93rd Highlanders went to India in 1857, not 1847, and were consequently there for thirteen not twenty-three years, and the 42nd spent three times longer in Britain between 1815 and 1865 than Trustram allows). What is therefore at issue is as much how those infantry battalions related to (say) Indian or Canadian society, and how that affected marriage and family life in the army. How many Indian wives were there in British infantry regiments? Certainly the hold of the colonies became sufficiently strong for many men overseas either to take their discharge and settle or, more frequently, to transfer out of home-bound battalions into those newly arrived.

Furthermore, the problems posed for the army by marriage were as varied over time as over place. The most truly long-service army was that of 1815 to 1854. Service was unlimited, the army small, and the loss through desertion and death sufficiently low to be adequately met by new recruits. As men served longer, marriage and enforced celibacy were more pressing issues. The period 1854 to 1861 saw an expansion of the army for the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny, and also a higher turn-over through casualties. Therefore, marriage rates fell. In 1871 short-service enlistment was introduced, and the problem of marriage during a soldier's career became less pressing: the War Office's attitude towards wives softened, and their financial position was rendered progressively more secure. Finally in 1886, the Contagious Diseases Acts of the 1860s (which had embodied the army's acknowledgment of prostitution as a necessary alternative to matrimony) were repealed. The change in the military attitude to marriage was, however, no more than apparent. What had developed was the army itself: that process had rendered the difficulties of army families temporarily dormant.

Unfortunately these broad themes tend to become submerged in *Women of the Regiment*. They are, however, implicit in Trustram's conclusion, which makes a surprising but justified leap to the 1970s, and which shows that once again the regiment regulated family life in a long-service professional army.

## Long in the fork

Keith Jeffery

A. W. COCKERILL  
*Sons of the Brave: The story of boy soldiers*  
236pp. Leo Cooper/Secker and Warburg.  
£12.95.  
0436 10294 3

Boys are, on the whole, slippery customers and this characteristic clearly fits them for military service. They can carry messages or act as scouts, providing sharp eyes and keen ears for army commanders. Boy soldiers, moreover, if they survive long enough, frequently sign on to become long-service Regulars. Armies recognize this useful fact, appreciating with the Jesuits (in some respects a similar organization) that if you get a boy young enough you have him for life. They make provision for military schools, apprenticeship schemes and various other incentives to "join the Professionals". All these aspects are covered in A. W. Cockerill's wide-ranging study, as is another area of juvenile military expertise: music. The most extensive use of boy soldiers by the British Army has been to play fife, drum or bugle. So much so that the "little drummer boy" has become a popular romantic figure in British military history. A boy soldier, indeed, could be defined as a person big enough to carry a drum; but not yet quite strong enough to carry a weapon.

Age, however, does not seem to have been a major stumbling block of military service. Alexander the Great, King Arthur and Cuchulainn, the ancient Ulster warrior notable for being neither Protestant nor Catholic, all started young. The great Marshall Saxe, one of the Elector of Saxony's 364 bastards, began his

army career at the age of six. The youngest recorded British soldier during the Napoleonic Wars was the seven-year-old Drummer James Wade of the 9th Foot. But there were some limits. Marlborough, wisely one feels, refused a commission to a five-year-old and in 1796 an army order prohibited the recruitment of any lads "who are not properly straight, open chested and what is commonly called, long in the fork".

In the British Isles the tradition of boy soldiers was reinforced by the establishment of military schools: the Royal Hibernian School in Dublin in the mid-eighteenth century (it lasted until 1924) and in 1800 the Duke of York's Military School, which still exists today. A more recent foundation is the Queen Victoria School at Dunblane, established to ensure that Scottish boys did not miss the opportunities granted to their Irish and English counterparts. Together, claims Cockerill somewhat sweepingly, these schools represented Britain's answer to the Spartan military system. School life was certainly hard. Corporal punishment was very common and was applied for virtually any transgression from talking in the ranks to bed-wetting. One example given is that of the nineteen-year-old Private Ends Setta (sic) at the Duke of York's School. On December 30, 1852, he was punished with "6 cuts and 6 hours in the black hole" for "answering the Commandant in a disrespectful manner". The next day the punishment book records him receiving a further eighteen cuts for "Winking and making a noise in the black hole". The same year two twelve-year-olds and an eleven-year-old were given four days on bread and water in the black hole for climbing on to the privy windows and indecently exposing themselves to the Commandant's servants. In the

early nineteenth century offenders could also expect to be suspended in a monkey cage in the main hall, or shackled by the wrists to a log for hours on end. But despite the harsh punishments meted out in the military schools, Cockerill asserts us that the boys "seem to have come to no real harm. On the contrary . . . the majority thrived on the discipline they received." It seems odd, therefore, that these admirably beneficial methods of correction are not more extensively employed today.

Food, as always, was a primary concern for boy soldiers. The bread and water provided in the Duke of York's black hole was probably not so very much worse than normal rations. Between the wars army food left much to be desired. Although Cockerill denies that food was ever consistently short or poor—boy soldiers were "always well fed", he asserts, but "many did not think so, for most had voracious appetites"—the reminiscences he quotes from ex-boy soldiers suggest otherwise. "I went to bed hungry every night", wrote one who had served in India. Some army stable lads supplemented their diet from the horses' weekly feed of bran mash and boys frequently resorted to stealing food. In the late 1930s apprentices at the Army Technical School, Chesham, habitually wolfed the harvest festival displays of fruit in the garrison church.

Cockerill provides numerous personal recollections of strict discipline, sub-standard living conditions and appalling food—all those things which, with that quality of leadership so abundantly inculcated on the playing fields of Eton, made Britain great. Yet this is essentially an affectionate book which celebrates boy soldiering. It is, as the subtitle indicates, the story of boy soldiers. It is not serious history.

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# Jaroslav Seifert, poet of his people

## Eduard Goldstücker

Although some Western observers were quick to point out that the receiver of this year's Nobel Prize for Literature, the Czech poet Jaroslav Seifert, is relatively little known outside his native country, if a random sample of Czechs were asked to name their most respected living compatriot, the eighty-three-year-old Seifert would without doubt be nominated by most of them.

Poets seldom attain this kind of popularity in nations which are fortunate enough not to have experienced periods of national oppression. But in the eighteenth century, some 150 years after the Czechs lost their national independence and with it their upper social strata of aristocracy and bourgeoisie, it was predominantly the handful of literati of peasant stock who initiated and led the movement of national revival. During the long process of emancipation the writers were assigned, or took upon themselves, the additional task of guarding the nation's interests and to this day whenever a crisis threatens or a disaster befalls the Czechs, their poets are to some extent looked to as substitute national leaders. This complicated phenomenon, deeply rooted in the past, thrives once more in the political climate of the last fifteen years. Poets translate popular hopes and feelings into words and are looked to for encouragement and consolation: he who wants to subdue the Czechs sees their poets as serious obstacles in his way and seeks to render them innocuous. Seifert's award should be seen in this light and not merely because he is the last survivor of the splendid pléiade of Czech poets which appeared in the wake of the First

World War, calling themselves proletarian poets and producing revolutionary works.

Seifert, son of a working-class family, published his first volume of poems in 1921 and, together with other young intellectuals, joined the newly-formed Communist party. In 1929, when that party's leadership changed its course (the so-called Bolshevization), seven foremost writers among its members, including Seifert, protested publicly and were expelled. Seifert, who had played a prominent part in the Czech avant-garde "Poetist Movement", after his break with the Communists worked as a literary editor, mostly in social democratic periodicals, and published one collection of poems after another. In the Munich crisis of 1938 and the subsequent catastrophes which lacerated and eventually destroyed Czechoslovakia, leaving its people dominated by Hitler, Seifert's poems were always in the front line of resistance. In those dark years he became the poet of his people, and he has remained so until this day.

In 1948, after the Communist party had seized complete power, Seifert was eliminated from public life for several years, but in 1956, immediately after the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, he was the first to protest publicly against the lack of freedom during the years of Stalinist terror. Harshly rebuked, he maintained a low profile until 1968 when, as chairman of the Czechoslovak Writer's Union, I asked him to become chairman of the newly instituted Rehabilitation Commission with the task of redressing as far as possible the injustices suffered by writers during that second horrific period. His acceptance was his expression of solidarity with the democratic endeavour of the Prague Spring.

After the Soviet occupation of the country

which followed, I was obliged to go into—let them hoped only temporary—exile. Seifert agreed to deputize for me as chairman of the Writer's Union during my absence. But as a consequence of the federalization of Czechoslovakia, the Czechoslovak Writer's Union had to be wound up and replaced by two national unions. A Slovak Union was already in existence: Czech writers submitted the articles of their new union to the authorities, held their first congress and elected Seifert as chairman. But soon the great purge of 1970 started, and the new union was declared illegal and disbanded: the great majority of its members were forced into what amounted to banishment and forbidden to publish, their previously published books were banned and they were subjected to a wide range of harassment. For a number of years Seifert was prevented from publishing his new poems and his memoirs; they were available only in type-written copies or printed abroad. But, no doubt in view of his great popularity, about three years ago, at the time of his eightieth birthday, that prohibition was somewhat relaxed.

The report that the Prague authorities themselves congratulated the recipient of the highest honour ever bestowed on a Czech poet is good news. It means that the moment of great joy felt throughout Seifert's native country will not be spoiled "from above". Beyond that one cannot help wondering whether this event will be taken by the rulers as an opportunity to review their attitude towards the writers and that they may cease to damage the intellectual capacity and the spirit of the nation. After fifteen years of so-called "normalization" they should know that the spirit is, as the Swedish Academy wrote in Seifert's Nobel Prize citation, "indomitable".

about VAT on books. Its real target is newspapers and journals, and it would be impossible to leave books out. I may be the most unpopular man in publishing now, but I wonder if in nine months time I might not be seen as one of the best forecasters."

...

At the end of next month the people of Ipswich, Colchester, Wells, Cambridge, Norwich and Bedford will have a rare opportunity to meet writers such as Alain Robbe-Grillet, William Burroughs, Eugène Ionesco and Nathalie Sarraute. From November 22 to 26 these and other luminaries of the John Calder list will be on tour for a series of speaking engagements, courtesy of the Eastern Arts Association. Now that responsibility for the promotion of literature is being largely shed by the Arts Council under its new "development strategy", it is good to see that at least one Regional Arts Association is ready to take over the job.

Eastern Arts is fortunate, however, in having a full-time literature officer; only three of the twelve RAAs are so equipped. Laurence Staig spends some 8 per cent of the Eastern Arts budget on literary projects and says he would have no difficulty in spending a great deal more. His perception of the need for literary subsidy is quite different from that of the Arts Council's *Glory of the Garden*: "It is not true that literature is supported by publishing and the libraries; if you want to develop interest in literature you have to go out and create it, not cut support for it."

*The Glory of the Garden* has landed Eastern Arts with some pressing problems. Currently there are five Arts Council writers' fellowships in their area, which will disappear next year unless some money can be found. The Arts Council's decision similarly to withdraw support from bookshops puts at risk a scheme for mobile children's bookshops in their region.

The Arts Council has left intact its "regional initiatives fund", to which Regional Arts Associations can apply for support for new endeavours in the literary field. It is this fund which is paying for the Eastern Arts publisher's scheme to back a small press distribution project, a scheme to put writers on local radio, a schools project involving literary magazines, and the

publication of a series of leaflets on how to get published, organize a reading, and so forth.

The result is that Eastern Arts have cornered £25,000, one quarter of the regional initiatives fund for this year. And it is only one of twelve regions. Laurence Staig acknowledges that other arts associations may choose other priorities, but he feels that as far as literature is concerned, the Arts Council's policy leaves too much to chance.

...

It appears that the Scottish Arts Council's attempt to bring a truce between Ian Hamilton Finlay and Strathclyde Regional Council over the rating assessment of his garden-temple in Little Sparta has failed. Finlay fears that another raid aimed at seizing art-works from Little Sparta is about to be made by the Sheriff's office, in order to pay the outstanding rates on what Strathclyde considers to be a commercial art gallery.

As I reported last month, the Scottish Arts Council has persuaded the independent rating assessor to reconsider the status of Little Sparta, with a view to its qualifying for mandatory relief. But as the Strathclyde Regional Assessor, Mr Jack Wood, explained to me, his verdict would only change the description of the property; the rates to be levied would still be a matter for Strathclyde. Not only that, the new description would only apply from the current year; and there would still be the matter of previous arrears.

Mr Wood has visited Little Sparta, but he has not yet made up his mind about altering the description from "gallery" to "garden-temple". He only received the Scottish Arts Council's evidence in support of Mr Finlay a week ago: Strathclyde Regional Council continue to say that he is in rates arrears.

Ian Hamilton Finlay goes on receiving visitors to Little Sparta, but the strain is taking its toll. He describes Strathclyde Regional Council as "ignorant fanatics" who do not regard themselves as part of the United Kingdom. He says they refuse to discuss the matter with him at all. "I want no special rights. If the law said the rates were due. I would pay them."

If they go ahead and attack us again, we're not going to accept that position, because it is not legal." Embattled in Little Sparta, and waiting for the Sheriff's men, Ian Hamilton Finlay says, "I can't understand why the outside culture stands and looks on."

# Letters

## Cambodian History

Sir, — As a specialist in the field of South-East Asian history, I was encouraged to discover a whole page of your issue of September 14 devoted to recent books on Cambodia. Your reviewer, Anthony Barnett, however, seems to imagine that the mere avoidance of polemics is itself a guarantee of sound scholarship in the study of that part of the world. At the same time, in praising the short history of Cambodia by David Chandler, he finds it necessary to dismiss French scholarship on that country in terms which would be highly offensive in any other context. On its own level, Chandler's book is very competent; but it is far from being a major scholarly achievement by comparison with the (predominantly French) research on which it is based; and it is certainly not "the first objective account" in any significant respect. Its one weakness, as Barnett observes, is its failure to cover the seventeenth century at all properly; the book falls even to mention Cambodia's one Islamic king, and his wars with the Dutch in the 1640s. But your reviewer is quite mistaken in supposing that the omission is due either to lack of source materials or to the inadequacy of previous research. It has more to do with the author's willingness to present Cambodian history as mainly that of a land-based empire which fell victim to its landward neighbours (Thailand and Vietnam), without paying due regard to the maritime factor at any stage in its history.

Mr Barnett is right to raise the question of historical continuity and the need to relate the most recent and most tragic phases of Cambodian history to the patterns of conflict of earlier centuries. But it will only be possible to do that if we apply to South-East Asian countries the same standards of scholarship — and the same intensity of effort — which govern our approach to the history and politics of European countries. Those who have most conspicuously failed to do justice to Cambodia, as a country whose culture and politics are worthy of detailed study in their own right, are those Western journalists who imagine that it is possible to become an instant expert on an Asian country in a matter of two or three years, once it has come into the news or has become the focal point of international propaganda. What emerges from Michael Vickery's *Cambodia: 1975-1982* — although not from your reviewer's account of it — is that both traditionally and in the most recent periods Cambodian society is extremely complex. One cannot hope to come to grips with that complexity by pretending that the historical sources are inadequate or that all previous scholarship suffers from "colonialist" bias.

RALPH SMITH  
109 Bedford Court Mansions, Bedford Avenue, London WC1.

**Bibliothèque Nationale**  
Sir, — Yes, for ordinary users of the *salle de travail* the BN is now an efficient and agreeable place in which to work. (It was not always so.) But have Anita Brookner and Hans van Marle never wished to use the manuscript room, with its little ritual game of *pousse-plaque*, or — worse — the printed book reserve collection (retrieve card, take lift, push bell, wait to be admitted) where it may take an hour to be granted the privilege of checking a single press variant?

The ever-tighter security leaves a growing number of loopholes: a favourite amusement of those grouped around the hidden coffee machine is to devise ways in which the system might be defeated. For smokers, however, there is little hope: chased off to the company of the squinting paper-seller by *défense de fumer — même dans la cour* they are now confronted by a second stage: *Défense de fumer — même sous la voûte*.

CLIVE HART  
Department of Literature, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, Essex.

Sir, — In his letter (October 19), Hans van Marle states that there is no equivalent at the Bibliothèque Nationale to the Woolwich collection of the British Library. This is not the case. The Bibliothèque Nationale owns a collection of books which are housed at Versailles; yet these books do not take twenty-four hours to be transferred to their parent location

as in London, but forty-eight hours. This estimate is, however, very optimistic. If the letter "V" which denotes books kept at Versailles, is not being served that day then the reader must wait another day before his application for these books is considered. Because of "staff shortages" the letter "V" figures on the list of unavailable shelfmarks about once a week.

PENELOPE WOOLF  
12 Gordon Mansions, Torrington Place, London WC1.

Sir, — Hans van Marle's defence of the Bibliothèque Nationale (Letters, October 19) is well taken but cries out for one certain footnote. As a senior officer of the BN recently remarked in committee, and as I know from personal experience, "in the term 'Service Photographique', the word 'Service' is purely notional".

RICHARD ABRAM  
23 Clifton Hill, London NW8.

## Plato and Lesbianism

Sir, — I have not seen Michel Foucault's book *Histoire de la Sexualité* (reviewed by Michael Ignatieff, September 28), but Sappho and Plato are not the only classical Greek authors to mention that women might and sometimes do prefer each other, in love and in sexuality, to men. There are eight beautiful lines by Anacreon that must depend on a generally known cliché about the women of Lesbos. The lines (*Oxford Book of Greek Verse*, no 174) have been, as far as I can find, translated only by T. F. Higham (*Oxford Book of Greek Verse in Translation*) and by Quasimodo (*Lirici Greci*), but both men mess up the final point of the poem, which is that the desired girl (from Lesbos) is gazing for someone (*feminine*) else.

I suppose it would be germane to Foucault's thesis that the women of Lesbos were also credited with generously applying their discoveries to men — this is what *Lesbizzo* means (see Aristophanes).

ALISTAIR ELLIOT  
27 Hawthorn Road, Newcastle upon Tyne.

## Belief and Knowledge

Sir, — In his review of S. P. Stich's *From Folk Psychology to Cognitive Science* (September 14), Simon Blackburn raises an age-old question: whether or not phrasing according to different "folk" psychological categories reflects different states of mind. It is odd that what was once regarded as a straightforward answer to this question — that offered by the former masters of Dialectics — remains constantly disregarded in this current debate.

It will be generally agreed that whether I express a similar state of mind as a *wish* of mine, a *desire* or a *demand*, my phrasing simply expresses my current bargaining position in a wider context. It is strange therefore that when it comes to *knowing* or *believing* our current reviewers fail to notice that a similar state of mind is simply proposed on a different negotiating basis. If I state my position as a *belief*, I am taking into account possible dissent, whether such dissent is likely to impress me (in which case I am prepared to amend my position) or not (in which case I declare myself to be a "militant" believer). When, on the contrary, I state my position as *knowledge*, I am dismissing out of hand any possible negotiation. Similarly, when I am qualifying your *knowledge* as a *belief*, I am strongly suggesting that you should be prepared to negotiate as to its content.

This has consequences when it comes to the issue of making computers "conversation-friendly". Such an end does not entail providing computers with a near-infinite number of possible internal states corresponding to all human folk-psychological categories. It only requires that a few distinct states be expressed with a varying degree of consideration reflecting the computer's varying disposition to negotiate its views with us. In other words, the computer will only become conversation-friendly when it is prepared to take feedback seriously.

PAUL JORION  
FAO, PO Box 1369, Cotonou, Benin.

*Computers and Artificial Intelligence will be the subject of a special issue of the TLS on December 2.*

## 'According to Mark'

Sir, — Galen Strawson's review of Penelope Lively's *According to Mark* (October 19) could be taken to be an admirably effective demolition job on an outstandingly poor piece of work by an established and hitherto acclaimed novelist. So it might well seem to readers of the *TLS* who have not yet read *According to Mark*.

However, to at least one reader who — unlike Mr Strawson — had read Mrs Lively's new novel with pleasure and admiration, what seems most striking is Strawson's cool but almost gleefully pertinacious determination to misread the book.

Strawson is in a muddle about intention. He writes: "Gilbert Strong is not meant to be insipid, but Penelope Lively's attempts to convince us that he is an interesting man are unsuccessful." Mrs Lively does not tell us whether Strong is "interesting", or, indeed, "uninteresting"; he is an earlier twentieth-century man of letters whose biography the eponymous Mark (a professional biographer of today) is writing. Mrs Lively is a novelist who, in this novel, has chosen, with considerable delicacy and subtlety, to show how little of "lives" can be retrieved, no matter how enormous the apparent material, and how much depends on the personality of the retriever. Mark is not the "I" or "voice" of the book: he too, like Strong, is an invention of Mrs Lively's. Mark is indeed "insipid"; that, I take it, is what Mrs Lively intended. He is also devious — like Strong, who is "insipid" as well. The earlier belletrist is mirrored in, but also refracted by, his biographer. And the long paragraph of quotation which Strawson blankly says Mrs Lively "attributes to Strong" is — to anyone who knows anything about earlier twentieth-century belletrists — a consummate piece of pastiche.

But Strawson's initial tactics continue right through his review. He cannot acknowledge that the novelist actually knows precisely what she is doing. His questioning of *glimmer! pulses, Muzak/chatter, cars which rustle*, comes oddly from a member of the "Martian" generation. Mrs Lively's characters were not invented by her to waste a "two-and-a-half-hour train journey" taken by Strawson; their inconsistencies are the inconsistencies of people, not of types or stereotypes. "Nor do we have to accept what the novelist says": of course not — but who, in Strawson's opinion, is "the novelist"? He seems, from his final quotation, to suppose it is Mrs Lively. But he is mistaken, crudely taking the remarks of an invented character to be Mrs Lively's voice.

ANTHONY THWAITE  
The Mill House, Low Tharston, Norwich.

## Poet and Audience

Sir, — Every author would like to compose the review of his latest production. Writing in response to the *TLS* is a partial way of doing this. The practice is, however, justifiable only when some large-scale misprision has taken place. For all the objections voiced in his letter of October 19, Ian Jack alleges no such error. His main worry seems to be that Denis Donoghue failed to see *The Poet and his Audience* as a major contribution to the sociology of literature.

Some of your readers already acquainted with this book may feel that Professor Donoghue's painstaking critique did its author ample justice. There is little in *The Poet and his Audience* that cannot be found in the standard biographies of the writers concerned. If Professor Jack really felt impelled to enter into controversy, it would have been more fitting on his part to answer the inquiries raised by his reviewer as to his reading in the field of author-reception. Professor Jack's silence on the subject of, for example, the work of David Trotter creates doubts about his qualifications for undertaking his investigations in the first place.

PHILIP HOBBSBAUM  
Department of English Literature, University of Glasgow.

We apologise for an error of transmission in the letter from Sir Garfield Barwick printed in our issue of August 17. The fourth paragraph should have ended as follows: "The evident end purpose of the action of the Governor-General was to bring about a general election — an opportunity for the electorate to break the deadlock."

## Basil Blackwell

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# COMMENTARY

## Chumps in Navarre

Martin Dodsworth

SHAKESPEARE  
Love's Labour's Lost  
Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

Love's Labour's Lost is a stylish play whose idea of style does not quite accord with our own. Its bouts of wit, all pun and rhyme, strike us as strained, and besides they take some keeping up with - "A mark! (O mark but that mark!) A mark, says my lady! / Let the mark have a prick in't to mete at if it may be: no easier to follow than it is to say. The fantasticalities of Don Adriano Armado and the pederasties of Holofernes are more straightforward, but always in danger of seeming too like the extravagances of the young people you would expect them to be parodying. The problem for the director, then, is so to humanize Navarre and his friends that as an audience we can have some sympathy with them. Barry Kyle's effective solution in the current Stratford production is to turn the foursome into escapees from *Charley's Aunt*, simple-hearted Oxford chumps who think that all there is to study is sitting at a desk and staring at a book.

The opening scene becomes something from comic opera. Four desks are ranged across the stage in front of the curtain, each with its green-shaded reading-lamp, and its young master stationed behind it. The oath to forswear the company of women is a test of Berowne's loyalty - is he really one of Navarre's set or not? The others fix him in their gaze as he comes last to subscribe his name to the ludicrous deed. They all sit down, earnest, complacent, begowned, ready to study. A moment's pause. How grateful they are to Berowne for breaking it, how welcome the later distraction when a splendidly impassive Dull (George Rastick) enters with the offending Costard at the end of a twenty-foot rope.

This is a comic *Love's Labour's Lost*; the audience ripples with laughter right up to the last scene, and there is lots of inventive detail of a dramatically robust kind. Don Adriano, Moth and Costard turn the riddle-me-ree about the fox, the ape and the humble-bee into a first-class music-hall routine; Berowne hides, not up a tree but draped about a winged statue of Cupid; in the same scene, Navarre lies hidden beneath the garden-bench, with a tiny ported palm to serve as the bush in which he says he has been closely shrouded. (Kyle's sense of business goes further when at the end the four young men are left standing at the front of the stage, positioned as they were at first, minus desks, the women leaving them, and a world of learning still before them where to choose.)

Though the production works, it does so, however, by slighting the play's delicacy and refinement. This is most noticeable in the music by Guy Woolfenden, which suggests the *Bachianas Brasileiras* done over for a coffee commercial - soft-focus autumnal languor. The emerald-green blotches of Bob Crowley's set, suggesting a deliquescent formal garden, have the same sort of vulgarity, and the white parols on tall whippy chromium poles remind us that subtlety is not here the thing, any more than naturalism.

It is much easier for the men than for the

women; for since they aren't supposed to have much brain, they have little difficulty in combining puppyish romps with a more substantial melancholy. Indeed Kenneth Branagh is an excellent Navarre: good-natured, excitable and a bit dim, he nevertheless suggests that beneath the high spirits he is in earnest, and that it's because he's in earnest that he's in high spirits. Roger Rees as Berowne is an excellent foil for him, sharper, quicker, yet perhaps less sure of his feelings, with marvellously expressive dark-eyed features. It is a pity that he alone of the young courtiers sometimes has to make up for his lack of grip on what he has to say with automatic-pilot acting skills.

The women have a harder time, because they are supposed to be cleverer than the men; this means understanding their lines, which they treat with a curious mixture of respect and disdain. You can hear the words but not make anything of them. Their elegant tight-waisted, long-skirted dresses in any case do too much to make objects of them. This seriously weakens the end of the play, where it is hard to believe, from these talking statues, that anything very profound has happened.

Frank Middlemass as Holofernes, a more worldly and imposing Miles Malleson, John Rogan as Sir Nathaniel, humble, pliable, but not simpering, and Edward Petherbridge as Armado, lonely in his dignity, make a fine comic trio. Only Brian Parr seems miscast as Costard - he is too full of low cunning to provide the necessary anchor in common sense that the play needs for its grander meanings. Perhaps, though, Barry Kyle was wise to cut his losses. This rumbustious, messy production still pleases.

## Hobby-horsical

Peter Kemp

The Booker Prize  
LWT

"You can't judge six different novels as if they were six racehorses", Melvyn Bragg remarked during Channel 4's coverage of the Booker McConnell Prize ceremony. For weeks, though - right up to that last lap he was filming - this was precisely how the short-listed books were being viewed. Turfy terms - "front-runner" or "outsider" - kept breaking to the fore. A spokesman from the National Book League assured everyone that he'd "never heard of a case of the judges being nobbled". Ladbrokes, as usual, were taking odds, with J.G. Ballard's *Empire of the Sun* a clear favourite at 4-7.

Jockeying for position, this year, influenced various aspects of the event. Booker McConnell, finding the new Betty Trask Award out in front financially, had to increase the prize money from £10,000 to £15,000, injecting more cash to preserve the cachet. Coverage of the award ceremony gave ITV a chance to compete with the BBC who (after making a prize exhibition of themselves with Simon Winchester's and Selina Scott's treatment of the 1983 dinner and deliberations) yielded the field to them. On past form, the odds were heavily against a clear run being managed. But, in the event, LWT's team steered their way round the hurdles with creditable skill.

Filmed against the customary background of din and diners, Melvyn Bragg gave a useful outline of the Booker Prize and what it can mean for a winner. He explained the selection procedures: each publisher invited to submit up to four titles; a grand total, this time, of 106 - reduced by mid-September to the final six. Those responsible for this year's whittling-down process were shown, and enough revealed about them to make clear that they were an especially jumbled bunch. One of them, in fact, had already featured fairly prominently in a curious little curtain-raiser of a programme that went out on Channel 4 the preceding night: Labour MP Ted Rowlands, conscripted on to the panel "to lower the brow", the presenter amiably observed. Posed in front of a fountain, he poured out his enthusiasm for "readability" and "rather old-fashioned values". What he couldn't stand, he explained, were "English middle-class novels about middle-aged hang-ups, sex and writers". So it came, as a surprise, the following evening, to find that this was exactly the kind of book to which the prize had gone.

Throwing a welcome stress on to the literary, Channel 4 intelligently divided its treatment of events between Melvyn Bragg at the Guildhall and Hermione Lee in a studio. After marshalling extracts from interviews with each of the six authors, she then chaired a discussion of their work by Peter Ackroyd, Malcolm Bradbury and Germaine Greer. Contributions from the first two rarely got much beyond a polite summary of anodyne accolade - "She writes very well, actually", "She writes beautifully". But Germaine Greer soon introduced a more robust note, bombarding all but two of the short-listed books with hefty reservations.

Greer's was a view of the finalists strikingly remote from that of the chairman of the judging panel, Richard Cobb, who opened his speech by declaring "I don't think we could have picked a more powerful short-list". This challenging assertion rather fell into perspective as Cobb then proceeded to enlarge upon his liking for books that are "easy to read", "pleasant and reassuring". Presumably, the Horlicks-like aesthetic went some way to explain the panel's ultimate opting for the castles of *Hotel du Lac*. Instead of the cataclysmic *Empire of the Sun* (predicted as a certain winner by all four critics in the studio), "Ballard", it seems, has it", Melvyn Bragg announced only moments before the revealing of the judges' decision. Amazingly, though, he hadn't. Confounding the tipsters, this year's panel handed the Booker Prize to Adrian Brooks, riding her customary hobby-horse, the ups and (mainly) downs of the lonely, literary lady.

## Students of nature

Rosemary Ashton

The Discovery of the Lake District  
Victoria and Albert Museum

The task for the organizers of this ambitious exhibition must have been tricky: how to avoid repeating, verbally, the literary clichés, and, visually, the well-known tourist views, associated with the subject, while allowing for the undeniable presence of both in the history of the Lake District which has been, as the text of the exhibition sums it up, "a key presence in the consciousness of a whole people for some two and a half centuries". They have succeeded strikingly. Wordsworth and Dorothy Coleridge, Ruskin and Beatrix Potter have been placed modestly, though firmly, within the visual tradition which, in turn, is viewed as a social phenomenon. Wordsworth is represented, certainly, by some lines of poetry, but they are few and drawn mainly from relatively little-known poems. Furthermore, the poetry illustrates a theme - the discovery, development and threatened spoilation of the Lake District itself. Thus from "The Brothers" (1800) we have the dismissive lines about "these Tourists" who

Pencil in hand and book upon the knee,  
Will look and scribble, scribble on and look,  
Until a man might travel twelve stout miles,  
Or reap an acre of his neighbour's corn.

"Wordsworth as Gardener" and "Wordsworth as Builder" are headings for exhibits showing Wordsworth's development of the house and gardens of first Dove Cottage, then Rydal Mount, and such exhibits are linked by the

guiding text to Wordsworth's political sense of the working history of local people in their natural setting.

The exhibition sets Wordsworth's ideas for cultivating his gardens in the context of Uvedale Price's notion of the picturesque which was advanced in the 1790s as an attack on traditional classical-pastoral views of nature. Here are examples of attempts by Wordsworth's friend and patron of artists, Sir George Beaumont, and his protégés to show natural scenes as neither cosily domesticated nor attitudinized as "sublime". A watercolour by one protégé, Thomas Hearne, showing Sir George and a fellow artist, Joseph Farington, sketching a waterfall, illustrates this. The two figures sit bottom left under umbrellas, sketching a luminous waterfall which runs diagonally down the canvas, separating them from enormous black crags. They are neither subduing external nature nor cowed by it, but are, rather, keen students of nature's awesome effects.

Study of the Lake District is, in fact, the keynote of the exhibition. Sketches and paintings by the forgotten and the famous, by writers as well as professional painters, are placed in close juxtaposition. Examples of Turner's visual mythmaking immediately precede a number of Constable's close studies of the shapes of clouds, crags and peaks. There are paintings which endorse the poet Gray's comment on a Grasmere cottage - "This little unsuspected paradise" where "all is peace, rusticity, and happy poverty, in its neatness and most becoming attire". There are even more which reveal the "dreadful" side of the lake scenery, also noted by Gray in his letters to Dr Whar-

ambitiously painted but now dated in its sentiment, encapsulates the reactions of a country bumpkin on his arrival in a strange city which appears to him hellishly depraved - even the dogs seem to be made of neon.

O'Keefe, whose work Thyssen-Bornemisza was the first to bring to Europe, does not trouble to record her views on human damnation in her city pictures. Though not her best, Thyssen-Bornemisza's "New York with Moon" is concerned with a dance between surface and depth. The buildings surrender themselves to the impact of the sky and the light of the street-lamp which struggle like Gombich's duck-rabbit to become the solid objects in the picture. One thinks of Kandinsky's proclamation: "Painting is a thundering collision of different worlds, intended to create a new world in, and from, the struggle with one another, a new world which is the work of art." Similarly, in a painting of a construction site, Frank Auerbach represents empty space by the thick application of paint, and objects by the lack of it, carved out with the finger (perhaps in tribute to the manual labour going on beneath him). Auerbach's painting bears some relation to the two Nolde works in the show, in which colour becomes almost tangible through the physical manipulation of paint. Nolde's art too required muscle of sorts. He wrote, "I rubbed and scratched the paper until I tore holes in it, trying to reach something else, something more profound, to grasp the very essence of things." Nothing has real substance in these paintings except the actions of the artist.

Most of the work here shares an emphasis on the flat canvas, the raw material of pictorial art. We can follow the variations on the theme from Manet's unfinished portrait of a woman in black, Derain's divisionist "Waterloo Bridge", and the ambiguous space suggested by the Cubists, Suprematists and Constructivists, to Magritte's shattered window, Beckman's jagged yet languorous wife, the tall, dreary post-Pre-Raphaelite panels of Kline, the rich dragged-down paint of Clifford Still, and Balthus's art with its roots in the frescoes of Giotto. But works by Dalí, Andrew Wyeth and Lucian Freud demonstrate the magnificent Baron's interest in more illusionistic work as well. Freud's portrait of Thyssen-Bornemisza, with its Watteau background, is intense and contradictory - perhaps all one can glean of the man himself from this opportunity to peek at his collection.

# COMMENTARY



Thomas Hardy's mother's cousin, Stephen Burden, making a proclamation in Puddletown, c1890; a photograph from Thomas Hardy's England by John Fowler and Jo Draper (192pp, Cape, £9.95, 0 224 02974 6), to be published on November 1.

ton. And the text robustly reminds us of the abuses which might be forgotten between such images of the beautiful and the sublime. It draws our attention to the plight of the poor during the Napoleonic Wars and the callous indifference of absentee landlords like the Bishop of Llandaff. J.C. Ibbetson's etchings of the poor at work, though innocent to the untrained eye, contain, we are told, coded criticisms of such landlording neglect.

We are reminded, too, that most of the works written by Ruskin after he settled at Brantwood in 1871 were concerned with the social effects of industrialism. And his exquisite sketches of single wild flowers are set in the context of his desire to teach social history by analogy with natural history, an endeavour shared by his predecessor at Brantwood, the radical engraver and journalist, W. J. Linton. Perhaps the organizers overreach themselves a little here in their determination to stress the serious social historical aspect of their subject.

It is true that Linton wrote his radical paper, *The English Republic*, 1852-5, largely from Brantwood, but it cannot really be called "the outstanding voice of radical democracy in England". The Chartist papers of Harney and Ernest Jones surely have a greater claim, as does Thornton Hunt's *Leader*, to which Linton also contributed from time to time.

Too insistent, too, is the parallel drawn in the text between the construction made by Kurt Schwitters, who as a refugee had settled in Ambleside in 1945, of "the pasted up detritus of civilization", and Dorothy Wordsworth's "collection of anecdote" - "Matthew Jobson's lost a cow. Tom Nichol has two good horses strayed" - as the material of her brother's poetry". Such strained connections, however, were perhaps inevitable in an exhibition which has been made to cover such a range as this. They are the price that has been paid for the laudable intention not to grant house-room to the trivial and the *déjà-vu*.

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## A modern morality

John Turner

Six Men of Dorset  
Shaw Theatre

In the mental world where Sir Keith Joseph and President Ceausescu coexist, the purpose of history is to provide the nation with appropriate myths, as a foundation for harmony and stability. Dissent also needs mythic nourishment, and looks to its own history. When history is made flesh, as it were, and put on stage to talk, the mythopoetic qualities of nineteenth-century labour history are unmatched, and no part of it is more fruitful than the episode of the Tolpuddle Martyrs. 184's tour with a revival of *Six Men of Dorset* attracted national attention when it opened in Sheffield last month, not only for the sheer force of Pam Brighton's production but also for the clarity of its political message. This is a morality play, whose inspiration is righteous anger against the oppressors of the working class.

This is a good year for a revival, just as 1934, the centenary of the Tolpuddle Martyrs' trial,

was a good year to write a play about hungry men. The first production, with Lewis Casson and Sybil Thorndike in leading parts, found its greatest success in the regions excluded from the economic miracle of the 1930s - everywhere, in short, outside the industrial southeast. The revival went from Sheffield to Liverpool, then via East Anglia to Tyneside. Its London performances are interrupted by a visit to Cheltenham to stiffen the martyrs of GCHQ; and like the TUC's Tolpuddle Exhibition (Congress House, Great Russell Street, until November 30) it is a useful subsidiary vehicle for the trade union movement's protest against the use of the legal system in industrial disputes.

It is a simple story, and this poetic end can be achieved without much violence to the historical record. Six Dorset labourers, led by the Methodist lay-preacher George Loveless (played here with a stern and ironic dignity by Paul Moriarty), were charged in February 1834 with administering illegal oaths during a meeting of a recently formed branch of the Friendly Society of Agricultural Labourers. A jury of

farmers found them guilty, and all six were transported to Australia for seven years. A campaign of protest led to their pardon in March 1836. The play ends here: later historical events sound a warning note, for all but one of the men, after a few years farming in Essex, emigrated to Canada to put the past behind them. The story is recounted within the direct conventions of the morality play. The characters appear, identify themselves ("I am Robert Owen..."), give a brief sketch of recent relevant circumstances, and get on with the business. Except for George Loveless, most of them, necessarily, are symbols: farmers who will not afford to pay a living wage, a paternalist squire who urges generosity to fend off rioting, a canting vicar. Later a bishop with a social conscience appears, to remind us that there is nothing new under the sun. The upshot of it all is that unity will win the day. This play will not convert the infidel, but it will do the faithful a power of good.

Since confident Tories will not go to see it, it falls to anxious radicals to worry about the meaning of Tolpuddle. Does the play perhaps shadow some inconvenient truths? Is that why the *Daily Telegraph* critic liked it? One abiding theme is the debt owed by the labour movement to religion. Methodism not Marx, the catch-phrase goes, inspires the Labour party. It certainly does, but what is a full-length portrait of Death doing in a trade union meeting? If nothing else it links Loveless the Methodist to rural paganism, and links his union branch not only to the early trade union movement but also to the secret societies of the late eighteenth-century and the machine-breaking supporters of Captain Swing. The antithesis between sterling god-fearing trade unionism and the dark currents of popular rural violence may not be so stark after all. More worrying, though, is that this play is really a piece of Dunkirk propaganda. It is about failure. Loveless and his brothers formed a union and were transported. Massive agitation brought them back. Agricultural wages did not rise, nor had they much improved eighty years later on the outbreak of the Great War. The audience at the Shaw stood to applaud a movement which "damaged no man's reputation, character, person or property": were they also applauding the 150th anniversary of a movement which always played the game, and always lost it?

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# Rights versus refuse collection

Andrew Saint

DENIS HARDY and COLIN WARD  
Arcadia for All: The legacy of a makeshift landscape  
307pp. Mansell. £9.95.  
07201 17437

For all its fantasies and evasions, William Morris's brand of libertarian socialism has shown tremendous tenacity in Britain. Though its authors are really pragmatic anarchists rather than socialists, this sparkling, original and thoughtful book is in the modern, resurgent Morris tradition. It amounts to a parable about tolerance. Its topic is the "plotlands", a neat, unexceptionable piece of planners' jargon used to denote the makeshift, self-built bungalows and shacks that mushroomed on tiny, parcelled-up freehold sites all over the south of England between the turn of the century and the Second World War.

A marginal subject, one might suppose: but in their opening and closing chapters Denis Hardy and Colin Ward use it to ask searching questions about the customary rigidities of house-building in this country. Who should be allowed to build and where? Outside cities, are planning controls which go beyond health and safety any better than expressions of class-based prejudice? Can we ever escape the inexorable, divisive, two-tenure system, with the haves occupying their own freeholds and the have-nots paying their ceaseless tribute to one arm or another of the state? The issues are old, but the history of plotlands emboldens the authors to venture some fresh, practical and civilized answers.

Plotlands cannot be exclusively defined. The cry of the common people for their own land is ageless. From time immemorial, people have encroached and built upon "manorial waste". Radical squatting, as the first chapter recalls, goes back at least to Winstanley's protest at Walton-on-Thames in 1649. But the coherence of the makeshift movement, leading to the creation of Peasehaven, Pagnam Beach, Jaywick Sands, Canvey Island and a score of other settlements detailed in this book, is different. It is a movement of landless city-dwellers, gaining speed after the trauma of the trenches, to ease their lot and spend what time they can in the sun and air. It takes place against a background of the best public transport and the lowest rural land-values that Britain ever had. Between 1900 and 1930 speculators found it easy to pick up riparian, estuarial or seaside land, often soggy and hard to reach, and chop it up into little plots which could be bought for a song. The purchaser might build immediately or in stages, depending on his means, or he might just wait. Frequently plots lay untouched for decades, their forgotten ownership a source of frustration to planners seeking to drain the land or abate nuisances.

The dwellings that did go up were vilified by all the contemporary commentators for the damage they did to the landscape. Now that they have mellowed or gone, it is easy to look

back on them with greater affection and charity. The inter-war period was, after all, one of reaction against Victorian permanence when people, having been abruptly reminded that life is short, began to opt for "short-life" solutions, egged on by gurus like H. G. Wells and J. D. Bernal. So they availed themselves of huts of all types and sizes, discarded buses, converted trams, and above all redundant railway carriages. Examples of all kinds are shown in the book's charming but indifferently reproduced illustrations. Usually the railway carriages were single coaches (ten stood behind a hedge at Arnold's Babcock Hythe), but sometimes they came in combinations. At Shoreham Beach the fashion was to put two coaches in parallel and connect them to make an H: at Winchelsea Beach some plutocratic plotlanders ("rather dashing people with fast cars", a neighbour remembers) had a whole set. Not all plot-holders were working-class, by any means. On the south coast there was a smattering of shopkeepers and minor bohemians lured by the promise of an unregulated life-style. The greatest show of Cockney solidarity was on the Essex coast, at Canvey and at the ramshackle suburb of Jaywick, in whose growth and welfare the veteran East End George Lansbury took a paternal interest.

Peasehaven, between Brighton and Newhaven, was the most publicized of the early plotlands. It was started by Charles Neville, a Canadian entrepreneur of doubtful probity, during the First World War. He ran a competition to decide the name: "New Anzac-on-Sea" won, but was thought better of. Neville promised public facilities which never materialized as a lure for servicemen to buy up his American-style, 25 x 100 feet plots with the lump sum they received on discharge. Peasehaven despoiled one of the handsomest remaining stretches of coastline in Sussex, its growth was painfully slow, and the local authorities ended up having to sort out the chaotic services and layout. Yet the residents soon developed a

deep loyalty to the place and resented the inevitable bureaucratic intervention. Such, everywhere it seems, was the mystique of freehold ownership. "We won't fight for rented property", affirmed a Basildon man on the coming of the new town in 1949.

The Town and Country Planning Act of 1947 was the plotlanders' Waterloo. It was an admantine document, designed to compensate for the weakness of its forebears and redress the balance between individual and community. Local authorities used it to erode these "eyesores" or get them converted into properly serviced homes with piped water and, if possible, electricity and main drainage. By this time the writing was already on the cabin wall. During the war many plot dwellings had been neglected; at Shoreham Beach, for instance, the "Bungalow Town" had been out of bounds and was therefore easier to suppress after a public enquiry in 1949. As people became more prosperous, they were less patient about poor amenities. Council houses had bathrooms and electricity; even caravans (a subject which the authors skate over too thinly) had services which made plot dwellings look primitive. Jaywick, to a generation which could afford a caravan or visit Torremolinos, was a very damp squib.

So the shacks began either to disappear or to be upgraded, according to the owner's whim and the local council's policy. Hardy and Ward trace this process through with as much care as they devote to the plotlands' first development. Though they are all "for the little man", they award good marks to the authorities for increasing tolerance. At Basildon, where the new town was carefully designated for an area containing no less than 6,000 unsewered dwellings, the development corporation learned to be conciliatory and plan its layout round many of the pre-war plots, waiting in some cases for the death of ageing owners before trying to purchase. Today, Basildon even has a nostalgic plotland museum and "trail" - an astonishing

about-turn in official taste, which would leave any rural conservationist of the 1930s appalled.

The rise and decline of the English plotland delicacy, skill and fairness. A penultimate chapter risks superficiality by looking at analogues abroad. The United States, where much of the English movement derived, cannot be bitten off in a mere eleven pages, since a great proportion of original American housing was in essence plotland development. Though the English plotlands were few in number, they square the issues of the individual versus the collective good, of rights versus release collection. On the broad Western across the problems were different. European comparisons are more apposite, and there is an absorbing section on the "chalet gardens" of Holland and Scandinavia, basically suburban allotments where families sleep the night in shacks during the summer, not always with municipal approval.

Hardy and Ward then go on to touch on the shanty towns, not the *bidonvilles* of Paris or Rome, but those of Latin America, Asia and Africa. Following John Turner and other experts on Third-World housing, they plead that these should be seen not as dangers to order and health but as creative expressions of need which, with careful coaxing and attention, can be properly integrated into the urban pattern. This leads naturally on to a final chapter in which the authors urge braver experiments in this country with plotland-style development, with builders and councils laying out a minimum of services and individual plot-taken then building as they want, freed from excessive regulation. In specialized, over-built, crowded Britain, these solutions will not solve the massive urban housing problem. But if Morris was right and people are happiest when they build with their hands, toil in their gardens and enjoy the sun and air, at least let Hardy and Ward's ideas be tried out on a larger scale than anyone has dared hitherto.

## Affinities with nature

Stephen Mills

RICHARD MABEY  
In a Green Shade: Essays on landscape 1970-1983  
186pp. Hutchinson. £7.95.  
009 154320  
NORMAN MURSELL  
Green and Pleasant Land: A countryman remembers  
138pp. Allen and Unwin. £8.95.  
004 7990155

Apart from his deft and elegant turns of phrase, Richard Mabey's most immediate gift is enthusiasm. Not many people could write 3,000 words on the Ordnance Survey and keep you amused while they discuss whether the Buckinghamshire name for snakeshead fritillary should be rendered as *crawcup*, *crowcup*,

*frogcup*, *fro'up* or, even, *frock-up*.

In *A Green Shade* covers sundry pickings from pages as diverse as those of *The Times* and *Harper's* or *Queen* or *Good Housekeeping* and *New Society*. Mabey offers us erudite little reappraisals of Richard Jefferies and Gilbert White, portraits of favourite landscapes colourfully dotted with local history and anecdote, and samples, twelve years old now, of his own pioneering investigations into the natural history of factory waste-grounds. Anyone, too, who missed the brief eruption of *Vale* magazine can here recapture a little of the flavour of a daringly literary ecological endeavour. Finally, one can relive a few days out of that enigmatic BBC experiment *Living In The Past*, in which a group of young people were brought together to construct and, for a year, to operate, an Iron Age village. The series irritated many viewers, but in Mabey it fostered a new respect for the achievements of our forebears and a new confidence in the viability of nature-based cultures. His account of the programmes is so wide-eyed that it prompts one to take another look at them.

Although the selection is meandering and informal, these pieces comprise quite a handy guide to the preoccupations of the intelligent Green Movement in Britain over the last ten years. For Mabey this is a movement founded on the quest for man's affinities with nature - not just tooth-and-claw affinities, nor even back-to-the-land ones - but rather those born of responsiveness to the natural world. Responsiveness depends on contact and contact is, of course, increasingly restricted by urban development, by technology, by ignorance and by attitudes to property. He claims to remember a childhood landscape adorned both with hedgerows in green tangles and loving couples in pink. Now the green ones have been rooted up and the pink ones wedged into the back seats of cars. Responsiveness in both cases is diminished.

Mabey's own responses tend to be more cerebral than sentimental. A distant gunshot thrusting out at a hungry, solitary Brent-goose which he has been watching elicits from him not an emotive complaint against hunting for food but a political objection to a bird that was

once free for all becomes private property when it is shot.

Mabey is committed to democratizing the natural environment. He ends with a "longue-en-chic" fantasy about pay-as-you-grow strip farming, the return of gleaming so that all over Hertfordshire kitchen blenders are whizzing round to keep suburban families in wholesome flour for the winter, and a children's game called "Farmers, Keepers". This celebrates the ancient and unbelievable myth that the nation's land and its wild creatures were once owned exclusively by a few individuals.

To the average Yorkshire sheep-farmer, Richard Mabey may sound like an outsider, just a spokesman for weekenders and Home Counties eco-freaks. In that case, Norman Mursell is presumably an "insider" and his *Green and Pleasant Land* the genuine rural article. For fifty years he was a keeper for the Dukes of Westminster at their 12,000-acre estate in Cheshire, a little morsel of the nation where the animals have been exceedingly private for centuries. There the workers enjoyed the privilege of daily contact with nature, labouring for the Duke from 6.30 am to 7 pm. While they survived, the loyal ones received mince pies from The House every Christmas and, when they died, their widows could look forward to an annual compensatory blanket.

This was the Old Life, with which Norman Mursell assures us everyone was content. He is an old retainer, schooled to a life of deference, recalling with pride, as if it were his own, the old Duke's prowess at strolling around sniping left-and-rights of snipe, while his employees got on with their work. Mursell's account of the running of a great estate is biased but so sincere that it must be considered a true piece of documentation. His story is scattered with some rather flat anecdotes - and one of two charming ones: the ancient farmer who resurrected his gun to shoot rabbits and got his eyes filled with dust from the woodworm in the stock; the old lady who insisted that the local bobby block up her plug holes in case the electricity escaped. Anyway, most pages of the book are worth turning to for Roger McPhail's delicate little drawings.

## In the poet's hand

H. R. Woudhuysen

P.J. CROFT (Editor)  
The Poems of Robert Sidney  
Edited from the poet's autograph notebook  
344pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £35.  
019812726X

"One of the most remarkable literary discoveries of recent times", the late P.J. Croft called it when he announced the existence of the Robert Sidney manuscript. The discovery was his own, and now just over a decade later he has produced a complete edition of its sixty-six poems. A modernized version faces a transcript of the often heavily revised and corrected drafts, and is accompanied by a detailed chronological table, a long introduction, notes and appendices. Altogether, from discovery to publication, Croft's is a fine achievement, made the more remarkable by the many obstacles and confusions which seem to beset Robert Sidney and his poetry.

To begin with he goes under the considerable disadvantage of being confused not just with one but with two other more widely known people. However romantic and distinguished his own life was, Robert Sidney could not escape that most crushing of all identifications - of being the younger brother of someone really famous. For well over two hundred years the painting of him now in the National Portrait Gallery was conveniently identified as an interesting picture of Philip Sidney. A great deal of scholarly effort went into showing that its unusual iconography related to the elder brother. Equally, Robert Sidney suffered, having been created Earl of Leicester by James I in 1618, from handwriting which, at a very superficial glance, could be mistaken for that of his more famous, and to some infamous, uncle, Robert Dudley, also Earl of Leicester. The Robert Sidney manuscript made its first public appearance at a London auction in 1833 when its compiler was correctly identified. Shortly afterwards it was rebound and lettered on the spine "Sonnets by the Earl of Leicester. MS." and by 1843 the poet Robert Sidney had disappeared to be replaced by the courtier Robert Dudley as the Earl of Leicester responsible for the poems. Even during his lifetime there seems to have been a certain amount of confusion surrounding Robert Sidney: another unusual picture of a melancholy youth leaning on his halberd, his armour at his feet and next to a shady tree, with a besieged fortress in the background, is listed in two contemporary inventories as being a portrait both of Robert Sidney and of Sir Thomas Knollys.

The correct re-identification of the author of the manuscript was only the first of the obstacles which stood in the way of restoring Robert Sidney's reputation as a poet. For more than a century the manuscript was kept at Warwick Castle and only came on the open market in 1974, when it was put up for auction at Sotheby's. Then it was bought in at £28,000 and emerged at the beginning of 1975 in the British Library. Croft does not reveal what commercial value was eventually placed on the poems - in 1833 they had fetched £5 10s, but had sunk to 32s by 1842. With the manuscript safely lodged in a national collection, in theory they were easily accessible to all, but in fact only if you could penetrate Robert Sidney's handwriting. Even his brother complained about it: "you write worse than I, and I write even enough". Lord Burghley thought Sidney was merely being wilful in producing his "ciphers, he knows you can write a better hand". Croft, whose paleographical skill and expertise were unrivalled, has been more charitable about Robert Sidney's hand, referring to the "dynamic verve" and "tense energy" of his "nervous and highly individual" italic. The truth is that Robert Sidney's handwriting is not easy to interpret: it is interesting to note the minor differences that exist between Croft's transcription of Sonnet 25, "You that take pleasure in your cruelty", in his magisterial *Autograph Poetry in the English Language* published in 1973 and that in the present edition. And there are still a few insignificant errors in what Croft transcribes.

Yet one of the most puzzling aspects of Croft's edition is that he does not transcribe the manuscript in full. Words and letters which have been crossed or amended out, or simply

deleted, are often ignored. This is a great pity for if Croft was not willing to interpret Sidney's first thoughts, who is? In the same way, it is disappointing that while a whole appendix is devoted to a detailed examination of the notebook's physical construction, comparatively little attention is given to the presence of different pens and inks in the manuscript and to the implications that these and the beginnings and endings of scribal stints have for what Sidney was doing in copying his poems into the book. Croft's transcript and occasional comments on the appearance of the manuscript are enormously useful, but one longs for more, and for more detailed investigation of the actual physical process of the writing and correction of the poems; for that is where the manuscript's uniqueness lies.

If Robert Sidney's handwriting appears impenetrable so, often, does the poetry itself. Croft seeks to illuminate it in three ways. First, he provides a modernized text, which despite a few oddities like "retchless" for "reckless" and "astranges" for "estranges", is generally very helpful. Yet it does lay itself open to the possibility of misconstruction. The beginning of the last verse of the last poem in the sequence reads in the manuscript "And if that dy I must / fayer on sworde to fall / of Tyrant eyes, then pined in fetters sterue"; Croft modernizes the

last few words of this as "then pined in fetters starve". "Pined" here could mean, as the *OED* defines it, "exhausted or wasted by suffering or hunger" - the hunger would go with the starving. But "pined" could also be a form of "pinned", which would go with the fetters. Either meaning is possible: modernization is a form of translation, and in itself an act of interpretation. Assuming a specialized audience for Robert Sidney's poetry, one might wonder whether supplying a modernized version was strictly necessary. There is one already available, whose errors might be corrected in the light of Croft's edition: Katherine Duncan-Jones's version published in the Spring 1981 issue of *English* (Volume 30, Number 136, available from Oxford University Press, Journals Subscriptions Department).

The second aid to illumination, Croft's commentary, should assist us here, but it does not. Again and again one turns to his notes for help with the meaning of the poetry, for some sort of unravelling of Sidney's often very strained language and syntax, and so often one is disappointed. There is clearly a marked degree of disproportion between the twenty-four pages of rather perfunctory commentary which Croft supplies and the 124 pages of his introduction. While this offers a mass of interesting material it is by no means easy to use, for it is not always

obvious where a particular piece of information, or the discussion of a point in a poem, is to be found. An index or at least an analytical summary of what it contains would have been helpful, as would have been a table showing the order in which the poems are printed - the dual system Robert Sidney used of numbering sonnets and other poems in the sequence separately (Pastoral 7 follows Sonnet 15, for example) makes finding where the poems are far from easy. Surprisingly, there are many discrepancies between the poems as quoted in the introduction and commentary and the modernized versions Croft prints in the text.

The introduction's primary concern is to bring out the sequence's "underlying design", to show that it "is a more sophisticated work of art than would be apparent were it seen only as a collection of individual poems". Croft argues that "Ficino's theory of love is the key to Robert's sequence" and that its "overall design" is modelled on *Astrophil and Stella*. But where the elder brother wrote his sonnets while "still unmarried and nourishing an adulterous passion", his more virtuous sibling created "the purest Neoplatonic sequence in Elizabethan poetry", whose purity is not simply abstract and intellectual, but also sexual.

Croft gallantly takes on Lawrence Stone to show that Robert Sidney married the probably



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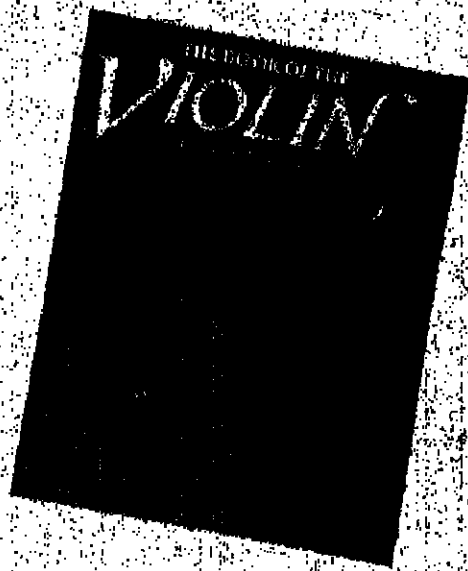
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illiterate but wealthy heiress Barbara Bamage for love and that "the marriage proved the prelude to a lifelong romance", in which "Barbara was the abiding love of Robert's life". Despite the long central Song 6 alluding to his wife and waiting to suggest the popular ballad form of "Walsingham", Robert Sidney's real love, as a good Neoplatonist, was Ideal Beauty, which was safe, and, unlike the Queen's Maids of Honour, in whom he seems to have taken quite an interest, unattainable. Following on from this course of argument Croft rejects the suggestion that the "she" of the sequence, who appears as Lysa and Charys, needs to be identified with an individual. Elizabeth Carey had been proposed for this role in an article about the Robert Sidney manuscript, to which Croft frequently refers, but whose authors, Hilton Kellihor and Katherine Duncan-Jones, are not mentioned by name.

The sequence's design and many of its finer points are often well brought out in the introduction, which should be a great help to the reader in passing judgment on Robert Sidney's poetry – something his editor freely admits he has not attempted to do. The reader's task in doing this would have been helped further if Croft had done more to place Sidney in some sort of literary context, which must begin with dating the poems. The most detailed consideration of this occurs in one paragraph in the preface starting: "The letters by Robert which

contain the closest parallels with his poetry were mostly written in the period 1595–8, and parallels cluster particularly around the first half of 1597. This may indicate when many of the poems were being composed . . .". Sidney was at Flushing in 1596–8, away from his wife, homesick and beset by political and personal worries and frustrations. Croft quotes copiously from his letters to his wife from this time (reproducing one – "I am sorry to hear that will: hath had the meazels" – in what appears to be a much reduced form), and makes similar use of the letters Sidney received from his faithful agent Rowland Whyte. Yet while we are supplied with all this personal detail only slight attention is paid to what was going on in literary circles, not least at Wilton, in the 1590s. This results in a curious appendix where it is argued that Fulke Greville in two early *Caelica* poems and Shakespeare in two parts of *Love's Labour's Lost* look back to poems in Sidney's sequence. But has the cart been put before the horse? Greville's biographer Ronald A. Rebholz dates the composition of the early poems in *Caelica* to 1577–87, while most editors assign Shakespeare's play to around 1595.

There would seem to be something wrong here. Unless the poems Greville and Shakespeare apparently knew were in circulation in the early 1590s or even the 1580s, Sidney would seem to be following their example rather than

vice versa. And if this is indeed so, apart from his brother's work, which other writers did he read? Here there is surely more to say about Robert Sidney and Walter Raleigh, whom Croft proposes as the friend addressed in Sonnet 24 "Canst thou turn from the haven of thy rest / For bitter storms that beat thee from the shore?" There may well be more to find out about Robert Sidney's relations with John Dowland and his son Robert, whose godfather Sidney was. What if anything did Sidney make of the poems and plays of Christopher Marlowe whom he had in his charge as a prisoner for a time in the Netherlands? Finally, given Robert Sidney's Neoplatonic interests one would like to know more about whether there is any connection between his poems and the *Fowre Hymnes* of 1596, written by his brother's old friend Spenser.

In what is certain to become the standard edition, Croft has given us so much that it might appear churlish to ask for more. Yet in the end Sidney emerges as a duller poet than he first appeared to be – duller, that is, unless you have a finely developed taste for scarcely diluted Neoplatonic poetry. Apart from two translations from Seneca all of his poems are about love, idealized and intellectualized, almost entirely stripped of any leavening of classical myth or allusion. The poems are full of striking images like "The endless alchemist" and "The fainting mariner", of arresting com-

pounds, "snakelike thoughts" and "renewed stilling lips" or "heaven-opening face", but also of hard lines and harsher meanings. Sidney is at his best with the regretful melancholy of the pastoral world:

Gardens, which once in thousand colours dressed  
Showed nature's pride, now in dead sticks shod,  
In whom proud summer's treasure late was found  
Now but the rags of winter's torn coat rest.

He is at his most powerful in short stanzas, lacking the ability to sustain a readily comprehensible and engaging style.

When *The Times Literary Supplement* announced the British Library's acquisition of the Robert Sidney manuscript its correspondent wrote: "It's too soon yet for any judgment, and even if a tiny voice wonders just how good a poet he is, it scarcely matters: any scraps are welcome from the golden age, and this is a rich and wholly unexpected treasure." The tiny voice is still there, and has if anything grown just a little in volume. Perhaps one finally comes to regret that Croft implicitly chose to see the Robert Sidney manuscript's principal interest as lying in the quality of its poetical contents rather than in its social and literary background, and above all in its geographical importance – the indisputable fact that it contains, in Croft's own words, "the most substantial body of original verse to have survived from the Elizabethan period in the handwriting of any poet".

## Elizabethan exchanges

### S. Schoenbaum

A.R. BRAUNMULLER (Editor)  
A Seventeenth-Century Letter-Book:  
A facsimile edition of Folger MS V.321  
463pp. Associated University Presses. £16.50.  
087413 2010

known for his role in the attempt to blackmail Lady Essex with forged letters. The evidence points to compilation before 1614. Until now the complete text of the letter-book has never been published.

The contents hold much – if uneven – interest. Some puzzles can be sorted out with gratifying ease. Thus, item 73, undated, cites no addressee, nor does the correspondent give his own name – he merely signs off, "By the private subject of your office for the present." A revealing passage reads, "Whosoever it were yet first plied the bitter Informer before the french Ambassador for a matter so far from offence: And of so much honor for his Maister, as those two partes containe; performed it with the Gall of a Wulff, and not of a Man".

The French ambassador and the two parts – this must refer to Antoine de la Boderie and to George Chapman's ten-act drama, *The Conspiracy and Tragedy of Charles, Duke of Byron*, acted by the Queen's Revels children in 1608. The play grated on French sensibilities. As performed at the Blackfriars theatre, it included a scene in which the French Queen boxed the ear of Henri IV's mistress. In two years Henri would be dead, but he still reigned. The ambassador protested strenuously, performances abruptly halted. Chapman probably wrote his letter sometime that spring, to Sir George Buck, the deputy Master of the Revels – the "office" alluded to. When the play appeared in print the next year, it had been brutally censored: not only was no ear boxed, but also much of the fourth act of *The Conspiracy* was struck out. In his dedicatory epistle, Chapman refers to "these poor dismembered poems". Other questions are less readily resolved: it is not clear whether Chapman is requesting permission "for the Presse" before the scandal took place or after the fuss had died down. In his very helpful "Commentary on Selected Letters" – this could have been fuller, but life is short and books are dear – Professor Braunmuller finds his way expertly through such thickets.

Chapman's surfaces often enough. William Strachey intercedes in behalf of "my Friend Mr Chapman" during the latter's courtship of a widow. This is the only time the name appears in this context, although other letters appear to represent exchanges between the two principals. (Strachey holds interest for the student of Shakespeare. He was the colonist on board the Sea-Adventure when it went down in a storm off the coast of the Bermudas in 1609. Shakespeare knew Strachey's *True Reportory of the Wrack* when he turned to *The Tempest*, although the account was still unpublished.) So little information is available about Chapman's life that the courtship episode arrests attention. "All yt I am," he vows, "I freely give

you: no more his owne, but onlie youres whose greatest comforte is your commaundment." In time commandments ceased. The lover never married the grandmother – one letter refers to "Children children" – he pursued so strenuously. Instead (if a not unlikely chronology may be trusted) he wrote the bitter comedy of *The Widow's Tears*. Other items – ten in all – concern the *Eastward Ho!* imbroglio of 1605. In a letter addressed to the "Excellentest of Ladies" – might this be Lucy, Countess of Bedford? – Ben Jonson dwells on his imprisonment with "a worthy friend, one Mr Chapman". Royal ire because of a couple of scathing allusions to James's Scottish entourage was responsible for the uproar.

## Sometimes a poet

### Katherine Duncan-Jones

SIR WALTER RALEGH  
Selected Writings  
Edited by Gerald Hammond  
294pp. Manchester: Carcanet. £14.95.  
085635 440 6

Legend and truth, in the case of Sir Walter Raleigh, are extraordinarily hard to disentangle. The two or three things about him that every schoolboy knows are probably all false. For instance, it was not until 1662 that Fuller told the story of his throwing down his cloak for the Queen to walk on. Raleigh seems to have been the kind of man people tell stories about, and many of the elements contributing to the popular image of him as a swashbuckler have quite early origins. Since this applies to his writings as well as his personal life, his literary achievements are somewhat mysterious. As early as 1604 the strangely baroque (and distinctly swashbuckling) poem beginning "Give me my scallop shell of quiet" was printed under the enigmatic subtitle "Supposed to be Written by One at the Point of Death". Manuscript versions apparently subsequent to Raleigh's execution in 1618 ascribe it to him; but Pierre LeFranc and Philip Edwards have given powerful arguments against its authenticity. It is, however, included in the present selection. Likewise, the swashbuckling satire "The Lie", printed in *A Poetical Rapsody* in 1608 without ascription, attracted some Raleigh attributions in MS commonplace-books, but is unlikely to be his. It, too, is included in the present selection, and is used to support a theory that Raleigh absorbed a technique of "plain style" from Gascoigne. Many readers, I suspect, will want these poems to be there, since they lend variety and colour to the small and rather pitiful corpus of definitely authentic poems. Gerald

The letter-book first attracted public notice when Bertram Dobell, stirred mainly by the Chapman and Jonson materials, in 1901 published a series of articles about it in *The Athenaeum*. It came to the Folger Library during the Second World War. Scholars have, directly or indirectly, drawn upon it. Now we have the whole lot, with unreduced facsimiles and transcriptions alongside. "For the errors that undoubtedly remain in the transcript," the editor modestly concludes his preface, "the reader has my apologies and a true copy in the manuscript facsimile." Fair enough. Professor Braunmuller has done his job diligently. Folger MS V.321 will repay further study. Now that can be readily pursued.

Hammond is too kind to his subject to quote Aubrey's assessment: "He was sometimes a Poet, not often."

The authentic canon is dominated by the "Cynthia" fragment, which, with three other poems, survives in Raleigh's own hand. Hammond's modernized text of this extraordinary poem, though reasonably conservative, inevitably obscures many of its distinctive authorial features; and his assertion that "This is the poem of Raleigh's . . . which is extremely questionable. But times refers to" is extremely questionable. But perhaps we should not expect too much of this volume, which does not pretend to be a scholarly edition. It is a popular selection of poetry and prose, perhaps designed to replace the very slim one prepared by Agnes Latham in 1965. In his brief introduction Hammond offers a plausible picture of Raleigh as a swashbuckler with hang-ups, writing of "the collision of an energetic and strenuous mind with a nature which gravitated towards resignation and endurance", and links him interestingly with Milton. The selections from Raleigh's prose works comprise the *Revenge* pamphlet, the *Discoverie of Guiana* (though not its preface) and five letters, in addition to a sampling of *The History of the World*. For a fuller and more scholarly sampling of the *History*, readers would be well advised to use the selections made by C. A. Patrides in 1971. But the breadth of the present selections is welcome. Raleigh's prose works are extremely hard to get hold of, since we are still largely dependent on the compilations of Birch (1751) and Clarendon (1829), and the admirable *Life and Letters* by the Revd Edward Edwards (1866). Getting Raleigh right may never be possible, but we shall never even approach a true likeness until we have a full and scrupulously discriminating edition of his works. Meanwhile, the one or two fragments offered here may be worth having.

## Uncertain accomplishments

### W. W. Robson

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The scope and purpose of the Oxford Authors series are a little puzzling. The ones so far published are Swift, Johnson, Wordsworth, Clare and Hardy; the ones said to be in preparation are Coleridge, Ben Jonson, "British Poetry and Prose 1870–1905" (what curious dates), George Herbert and Henry Vaughan (in a single volume), Donne, Matthew Arnold, Hopkins, Byron, Dryden, Pope, Milton, Shelley, Emerson and Marvell. Are these all there are going to be? If so, and if they are meant to represent the central line of literature in English, there are some striking omissions: no Shakespeare (pretty thin on drama in general) and no novelists (Hardy is there, but only as a poet and – very skimpily – a writer of non-fictional prose). If Shelley is included, why not Keats? Nor is there any indication of what is to be the policy of selection within the works of the authors chosen. The Swift volume, for instance, excludes *Gulliver's Travels* because it is "easily available elsewhere". Will *Paradise Lost* then be excluded from the *Milton*? If so, it is going to be odd to publish the volume with simply *John Milton* on the cover. No background information is supplied about these and other natural questions, the most tantalizing of which, to me, is why the sole representative of American literature should be Emerson. In the meantime we must be content to enjoy what we are promised, and get, "a generous selection from the writings – poetry and prose, including letters . . . to give the essence of a writer's work and thinking", together with notes, introduction, "chronology", and suggestions for further reading about these authors, in handsome and reasonably priced, though rather dowdy-looking volumes.

The intended readership is "the student and general reader", and as I feel qualified to represent both points of view I will make a few incidental comments on what has so far been published. As I have already noted, the Swift raises eyebrows because it leaves out what for most people is Swift's main work; it is like having a *Burton* without *The Pilgrim's Progress*, or a *De Vere* without *Robinson Crusoe*. Swift was mainly a pamphleteer and most of his writings in prose and verse were written to serve an immediate purpose; except to the historian, his subjects are no longer of importance. I doubt whether Swift really has 600 large pages' worth of interest for the ordinary reader, apart from *Gulliver*. The old Nonesuch edition (1949) was better value: it did include *Gulliver*. On the other hand, it also included lengthy textual notes, wasted on the ordinary reader, but no explanatory notes. The Oxford Authors volume is better in both these respects, and its introduction, though not so elegantly written as John Hayward's in the Nonesuch, is much fuller and more informative. The selection from Swift's work in general is judicious in both the old and the new books. The Nonesuch was surely right, however, to print the selections from the verse all in one section. Oxford Authors mingles prose and verse, in its mainly chronological arrangement, from *The Battle of the Books* (1697) to "Directions to Servants" (1745). But both arrangements have their pros and cons.

There are one or two oddities in the Swift. Some of the history in the introduction is hard to believe. On page xviii we read "When in 1688 the Roman Catholic monarch James II abdicated in the face of the invasion of William, Prince of Orange . . ."; certainly after 1688 the legal fiction was maintained that James had abdicated, but he did not think he had. On the same page we read "On 1 July 1690 William decisively defeated his nephew James at the Battle of the Boyne . . .". Was James II the nephew of William III? In the "Notes on the Text" we read this about Swift's revisions: "Rewriting of even so little as a paragraph is so out of character as to be virtually non-existent, and this fact alone underlines the absurdity of the recent contention that the nine sorry paragraphs in Motte's 1726 text of *Gulliver's Travels*, later replaced with authentic material in Faulkner's 1735 text, were directly from Swift's pen." This sounded so amusingly tetchy that as a student and general reader I felt I should like to be told what these paragraphs were, and what absurd person had contended for their authenticity, and on what grounds; then I remembered that *Gulliver's Travels* is not included in the volume. But then how can it be relevant to allude to this controversy about its text?

Johnson was rather like Swift in many ways, but his company is more congenial, and the Oxford Authors volume, ably edited by Donald Greene, does ample justice to him as a writer. The arrangement of the selection is intelligible and logical; genre is attended to here. The book is separated into poetry, early prose, periodical essays, arranged chronologically in each section; then comes the preface to Shakespeare, with specimen annotation; then the later prose, from the 1750s to 1784; *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (abridged); then some of the prefaces to the works of the English poets (ie, what is commonly called *The Lives of the Poets*), "Addison" and "Collins" being given complete, and others in excerpts. Finally there is a selection from the diaries and letters.

All this is admirably done, and the introduction is informative and lucid. But does Johnson really do what the general editorial formula proposes, ie, give "the essence of a writer's work and thinking"? We have to picture a reader for whom this volume is all there is of Johnson. Does it give the essence of him, when as everyone knows he is remembered mostly as a talker? Of course it is easy to reply that Boswell and Mrs Thrale are readily available – but do students (young students) read them much? Would it have been better, having their needs in view, to leave out everything except the short list of the great poems, *Rasselas* (which is included entire in the Oxford Authors volume) and a generous selection from the *Lives of the Poets*, and add copious extracts from the records of his conversation? Once again we are brought back to the problem of what this series is intended to accomplish. Nothing could be better as a selection from "Johnson the writer" than this volume. But then it might have been better to call it that, and perhaps have a companion volume of Johnson's talk and other Johnsoniana. Meanwhile for people who love reading Johnson this volume is delightful, and the editor deserves the highest praise.

With the Wordsworth we enter an area of critical controversy. Wordsworth's endlessly tinkered with his poems, and every way of presenting his work in a modern edition is open to cogent objections. The tendency of twentieth-century scholarship has been to steer away from the Victorian Wordsworth, the collected edition of 1849–50, in spite of Wordsworth's remark to Alexander Dyce in 1830: "You know what importance I attach to following strictly the last copy text of an author." Stephen Gill, the editor of the Oxford Authors volume, offers a reasoned defence for offering words, first a selection in which the poems are ordered according to the date of their composition, and presented in texts which give as nearly as possible their earliest completed state. The case against the last edition is stated forcefully. Wordsworth's tinkering was not done "in a creative burst of revivings were not done 'in a creative burst of revivings were not done' in a creative burst of revivings were not done". Some poems only appear in a text which radically changes their original conception. Others are incorporated into other works or dismantled to make new ones. Much excellent work has been done in the last few years, and the Oxford Authors volume is a welcome contribution to the field.

lent poetry (including *The Prelude*) was not published by Wordsworth at all. So Gill has broken with all the editorial pioneers and given us a much more tentative, groping, rough-hewn Wordsworth than the school classic we are used to. It is a refreshing, if slightly disconcerting, experience to read "Peter Bell" in the earliest completed version of 1798, rather than in the much revised first edition of 1819.

Any decision about how to edit Wordsworth is controversial. Very little of his work, except for a few lyrics, now belongs to the common reader (unlike *Gulliver's Travels* or Boswell's Johnson), and so the needs of students can be exclusively considered. I should judge that they are well met. It goes without saying that the introduction is of real value and the annotation copious and excellent. The 1805 text is chosen for *The Prelude*. Although the selection from the prose is, understandably, less full, all Wordsworth's great pronouncements on poetry are given. I did not find any poem that I wanted to add to the essential poems, but there is much that is of considerable interest and not widely known.

Clare, unlike Wordsworth, has not been added to the number of the canonical poets, and in their introduction Eric Robinson and David Powell, who have edited him for the Oxford English Texts, rightly discuss why this is so. Their explanation is mainly that he was "typeset" early as a rural poet; his publisher, John Taylor, had been involved with the successful publication of another rural poet, Robert Bloomfield, and believed that he had now a Bloomfield of his own. Besides this marginalization there was also the dialect element in Clare, and non-standard spellings and forms of speech, which may have repelled snobbish critics. Perhaps the editors might have laid more stress on another disadvantage to Clare's reputation, his failure to fit comfortably into any one literary period. His life included the "Romantic" and part of the "Victorian" period, yet his poetry has its roots in the eighteenth century. In this respect he resembles Landor, who has also suffered in reputation through seeming "out of phase".

Apart from "I Am", a poignant document if not a great poem, and the exquisite passage about the snail in "Summer Images", Clare's verse does not haunt the memory, and though he does have some variety of matter he seems at his best only in nature poetry. The editors, however, regard him as a major poet and give us a generous selection from his verse, tracing the development of an increasingly personal voice through *The Shepherd's Calendar* (1827), *The Rural Muse* (1835) and *The Midsummer Cushion*, not published till 1979. They draw attention to his intelligent criticism of his contemporaries and the vigour and humour of his prose.

They suggest too that the asylum poems have been overrated, because of the pathetic circumstances of their composition, and also because it is easier to establish a text for them. They think Clare's poetic development was retarded during the asylum years, and point to the poems in imitation Scots dialect, and other signs of sentimentality (though Clare may have thought of them as songs set to music and hence to be judged by different criteria). Clare was effectively a prisoner in those years, he had no home to return to, and no opportunity to make an independent living. Victorian taste had largely turned against poetry and towards the novel, and in poetry to the exotic, the highly decorated, or the dramatic (in Scott, Tennyson, Browning), all alien to Clare's "quiet voice from the English countryside". I feel about Clare as George Orwell did about W. H. Davies, a similar kind of poet: Davies "gives one the feeling of drinking draught after draught of spring water, wonderfully refreshing, but . . . turning one's mind in the direction of whisky after the first pint of two".

Hardy wrote more than 900 poems, and Samuel Hynes's excellent selection includes well over half of them. He includes all the best known ones and many others that show the different modes and tones of Hardy's poetry, though in his introduction he emphasizes the sad old man as the most enduring memory we have of it. There is nothing here of Hardy the novelist, and if this volume is meant to represent all that matters in Hardy other than the novels it might have been better to include

some of the short stories, which are unduly neglected, at the expense of some of the poems which merely repeat over and over again Hardy's characteristic themes, broodings and preoccupations. But if this book is judged solely on its representation of Hardy the poet it comes off very well. The modern dismissal of *The Dynasts* is implicitly supported (like the dropping of *The Excursion* by selectors of Wordsworth) but a few songs from it are given. The central stress is on Hardy the lyric poet, and Hynes has just and sensitive things to say about him in that capacity. "Hardy's poems", he says, "belong to an English tradition that goes back to Romantic poets like Wordsworth and John Clare, and beyond them to the anonymous beginnings of the English lyric in the Middle Ages. It is a poetry, essentially, of normative experience; plain, low-pitched, physical, and abiding. It says that life goes on, and that human beings think and feel in much the same way from one generation to another, and from one century to another, and that because they think and feel, they are capable of tragedy, and of poetry. It is the principal tradition in English verse." I don't know what "normative" means here ("normal", perhaps?) and most of the things Hynes thinks particularly characteristic of English verse seem to me to have been said by Homer, but otherwise this is very well put, and in a context of excellent literary criticism quite free from academic jargon.

*From Writer to Reader: Studies in Editorial Method* by Philip Gaskell, first published in 1978, is now available in paperback (268pp. St Paul's Bibliographies, West End House, West End Terrace, Winchester, Hampshire SO22 5EN. £8.50, 0 906795 30 3). By presenting extracts from the early texts of twelve works of literature and following them through their surviving stages from writer to reader, Gaskell aims to illuminate the theory and practice of textual editing. The works range from Harington's translation of *Orlando furioso* (1591) to Tom Stoppard's *Travesties* (174).



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# Diagnosis of decline

Jonathan Israel

DAVID R. RINGROSE  
Madrid and the Spanish Economy, 1560-1850  
405pp. University of California Press. £29.20.  
0520044576

This is an outstanding work, something of a model of how to write economic history, which will surely be consulted by a multitude of students, scholars and the general public. It is, all specialists in the field will agree, one of the most important publications of recent decades dealing with the economic decline and stagnation of early modern Spain. It adds a good deal which is new, both in terms of data and interpretation, and takes the whole debate about this major and ever controversial topic several stages further.

David R. Ringrose's objective, in which he largely succeeds, is not simply to reconstruct the demographic and economic evolution of Madrid but to delineate clearly the phases of its interaction both with its hinterland, Spain's land-locked interior, and with the country's coastal periphery. Bringing out the elaborate counterpoint between these three basic components of Spain's economy, he presents a full and mostly convincing account of Madrid's central role both in the process of decline itself and in perpetuating the prolonged phase of subsequent stagnation which persisted into the nineteenth century. Particularly effective and useful is the way the author combines the use of new statistical material which he has gathered, relating to Madrid itself, with a comprehensive selection of other data, relating to the interior and periphery, which he has assembled from the mass of secondary literature, including numerous relatively little known articles published in sometimes rather obscure Spanish regional journals, all of which he collates and integrates with his own findings in a masterly fashion. In all, he presents no less than ninety-two statistical tables and graphs, the bulk of what is new in them concerning patterns of

the results, both for students of Spain and of early modern Europe more generally, are of wide-ranging significance. First and foremost, we have here overwhelming confirmation of what one or two historians had previously argued more tentatively: that the decline of Spain began not before but slightly after 1600 and involved a rapid, indeed catastrophic deterioration and contraction. In short, Spain, and especially the Spanish interior other than Madrid, suffered the most spectacular demographic, commercial and industrial collapse of early modern times. The widely influential notion, vigorously advanced in recent years by Henry Kamen (though never convincing to those who had actually researched the crucial period), that there was no fundamental change in the economic and social structure of Spain during the first part of the seventeenth century and that Spain never in reality declined at all, is so thoroughly demolished that it can hardly be said that there is anything of it left. At the same time the older but still popular idea, deeply entrenched in the standard textbooks, that Spain's decline began during the reign of Philip II, somewhere around 1570, has been shown, once again but this time conclusively, to be sheer nonsense, based on a confused understanding of the impact on Spain of the outbreak of the Low Countries wars in the 1570s, which forced a re-routing of Spanish wool exports away from the Netherlands, destroying the vitality of one or two towns in northern Spain, notably Burgos and Medina del Campo. That Spain declined, and declined spectacularly, during the first third of the seventeenth century there can no longer be any serious doubt. It is now abundantly clear, despite the remarkable amount of nonsense that has been written to the contrary, that the sudden proliferation in early seventeenth-century Spain of *arbitristas* that is writers of economic tracts and discourses proclaiming doom and gloom as well as a wide assortment of suggested remedies, coincided exactly with the period of break-down and ruin.

But short and sharp though it was, Spain's decline was a complex process. On the whole, coastal Spain suffered a less severe decline than did the interior and soon staged a partial recovery, diverging more and more from the

rest of the country, owing to involvement in overseas trade with north-western Europe and Spanish America. And then Madrid, the third component of Spain's economy, collapsed several decades later than the rest essentially because of the growing concentration of government, trade and finance there, precisely during the first three decades of the seventeenth century, when the rest of the country slumped. Thus the years 1600-30, the decisive phase of setback for Spain as a whole, were a period of explosive growth for Madrid, its rapidly increasing population rising by 1630 to around 175,000. Then, from around 1630, Madrid in turn sank into a sharp decline, though the city's economy was never so totally blighted as was that of the other cities of the interior. The slump in the decades 1630-80 brought the city's population down to around 125,000 and was followed, as in the country generally, by an immensely long phase of stagnation.

But why 1630? Ringrose's statistical tables are not so precise an instrument that we can easily infer the precise year in which the collapse of Madrid's economy began. He seems to be arguing that Madrid's decline began somewhere in the 1630s. And here we come up against the familiar limits of an economic history study of this type. The author offers some conventional explanations as to why the turning-point came then, alluding to rising taxation and the Spanish Crown's excessive commitments in the Netherlands and Germany, but at this point he becomes somewhat tentative. Having identified the middle decades of the seventeenth century as the crucial watershed in the history of Madrid, he has curiously little to say about the actual disasters, commercial, financial and political, which afflicted the city at that time. He mentions the adverse impact of the long war between France and Spain which broke out in 1635 but fails to enlarge on this in any way. In particular, he makes no mention of the shutting off of the overland route, via Navarre and Bayonne, which, since 1621, when direct links with Holland were severed, had been Madrid's chief link with Amsterdam. For Madrid, this was one of the most immediately damaging effects of the severing of relations with France.

And then, in view of Ringrose's formidable reading, it is highly perplexing to find that he makes no mention of the recent research of his fellow American historian, J.C. Boyajian, on the Madrid financial crash of 1647 and the rise and fall of the Portuguese New Christian bankers who, from 1627 to 1647, dominated the financial life of the capital. No less strange, Ringrose fails to discuss the vicious resurgence of Inquisition persecution in Madrid, after Olivares's downfall, in 1643, which was specifically aimed at the Portuguese New Christian commercial élite and which precipitated the flight of the bulk of this group during the years 1645-60, mainly to Amsterdam and Livorno but, to a lesser extent, also to Hamburg and London, an exodus which, as everyone who has dealt with it knows, did substantial damage to Madrid, stripping the city of a large part of its capital resources. To any historian sensitive to politics as well as to economics, it is bound to seem that the author should have specified 1635 and not 1630 as the starting-point of Madrid's decline and that he should have investigated the context of Madrid life in the mid-seventeenth century with more care.

What was it that caused the decline of Spain according to Ringrose? Disaster ensued, he claims, from changes in circumstances at the end of the sixteenth century: "as agricultural output stagnated, food shortages and American bullion pushed up Spanish prices and labour costs, allowing foreign products to capture Spain's overseas markets and penetrate her domestic ones. At the same time, rising taxes in a static rural economy weakened domestic demand and regional exchanges." This is a splendidly concise collation of all the old arguments adduced to explain the decline of Spain but the fact remains that all this is purely speculative and gives no real indication as to why the key reversal of trends, followed by a disastrous deterioration everywhere, except at Madrid, began shortly after 1600.

The point is that the decline of Spain was not a gradual transition but a sudden, catastrophic setback. The capture of Spain's domestic and

American markets by foreign products was indeed crucial. The manufacturing towns of the interior - Toledo, Segovia, Valladolid, and Córdoba - were the hardest hit of all, losing more than two-thirds of their population, and they clearly dragged the agricultural economies of their surrounding regions down with them, a process which destroyed much of the traditional interchange between interior and periphery. But why should so momentous a conquest of markets have occurred specifically at the beginning of the seventeenth century? As matters now stand it would seem we are able to date the commencement of the collapse very precisely indeed. At Toledo, the most important of Spain's manufacturing centres, while there was clearly some loss of momentum and difficulty throughout the period 1590-1609, the real collapse, the dramatic disintegration on which historians ought to be focusing their attention, took place in the years 1609-21, not before and not after. And there is surely no great mystery about this, provided one looks at the political context. The flood of Dutch, Flemish, French and English products which poured into Spain as a result of Lerma's peace policy, and especially his signing of the Twelve Years' Truce with the Dutch, in 1609, totally transformed conditions both on the

## An epic archbishop

Jeremy Catto

R. A. FLETCHER  
Saint James's Catapult: The life and times of  
Diego Gelmírez of Santiago de Compostela  
341pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £28.  
0198225814

The Compostela pilgrimage was once more real in England that it can be now. Lourdes and Fatima have the pilgrim trade, fired by a Marian devotion which outshines anything St James the Greater can offer. The road to Santiago presents more than the usual obstacles to the traveller, which also manifest themselves in the jealous particularism of corporate bodies met with by every historical enquirer. Paradoxically perhaps, the historical energy devoted in this century by Spanish historians to their country's medieval past has been prodigious: Menéndez Pidal, Sánchez Albornoz, Américo Castro would be giants in any historiography. Their task, like Stubbs's, was to define the political and cultural tradition of their country, its *hispanidad*. It has largely been left to foreign scholars to point out the links and parallels between Spain and her neighbours, her Islamic heritage, her Mediterranean economy, her part in the friendship network of Cluny.

In recent years a remarkable group of English historians of medieval Spain, largely though not exclusively concentrating on its neglected antiquities of the Spanish church, has begun to make its own contribution. In 1978 R. A. Fletcher's austere titled *Episcopate in the Kingdom of León in the Twelfth Century* placed the church of the conservative north-west in a European light. Now, with "a narrower focus and a longer reach" he directs his attention to the maker of the great pilgrimage church of Santiago de Compostela, its first archbishop Diego Gelmírez (1100-40). Called with pointed archaism a "life-and-times" biography, and boldly addressed, with sparkling clarity, to a wide readership, it not only brings to life another epic archbishop, but opens up the isolated, inward-looking world of Galicia, the origins of the cult of St James at Compostela, and throws light on the nature of pilgrimage itself.

Diego Gelmírez rose to be bishop and later archbishop of Santiago much as Thomas Becket came to Canterbury: by making himself useful to previous bishops and the king of León and Castile. Behind him lay the long tradition of Galicia, a soft, wet country of rolling hills and long ford-like *rias*, cut off from the central by the last outcrops of the Cantabrian chain. The kingdom of Asturias or León was itself a remote province, cut off from the Carolingian mainstream of western Europe and untouched by the brilliant civilization of Moorish Córdoba; Galicia doubly remote, a province of

Spanish domestic market and in the re-export trade to the Spanish Indies. Spain's economy was potentially vulnerable to north-west European penetration long before 1609. No one disputes that it suffered from major weaknesses. But it was a shift in policy at home, combined with a rapid expansion in north-west Europe, which destroyed Spain's economic vitality and independence.

David Ringrose's magisterial book brings us several major strides closer to a comprehensive grasp of Spain's decline to a subordinate economic status dependent on north-west Europe and, in particular, on Amsterdam, which took the bulk of the silver re-exported from Spain during the second half of the seventeenth century. We now, seemingly, have all the elements of a complete explanation at hand. What is still lacking is a degree of liaison and collaboration between economic and political historians. Beyond that what remains to be done is to wean educated opinion off the hoary old view that Spain's decline began in the 1570s and the no less hoary (and even more wrong) view that there was no decisive structural change in the Spanish economy during the first third of the seventeenth century and that the decline of Spain is simply a myth created by misguided scholars.

a province: raided from the sea on occasion, but not yet the nursery of Atlantic seamen who would sail with the Armada. Here then, between the eighth century and the eleventh, new books, new ideas barely stirred the surface of traditional life. An antique learning, culled from Isidore and the Spanish fathers, and preserved in the idiosyncratic "Visigothic" script, passed for the Galician equivalent of the Carolingian renaissance. Fletcher's evocation of tenth-century Galicia, a Prospero's Isle where an inward-looking and much internecine nobility washed down their lobsters and coquerels with Galician cider, unconcerned with infidels or any foreigner, is one of the best things in the book. For a parallel society one would have to look to Ireland - but Irishmen travelled further - or Sardinia.

Another surprise is that the traditional theme of medieval Spanish history is conspicuously absent. The wars against the Moors hardly touched Galicians before 1150, to whom they were at best a rival focus of patronage for the Leonese kings; and the idea of St James as the protector of Christian Spain must now, it seems, be dated to a later period. Like many prelates of the early twelfth century, Diego Gelmírez distilled the earlier traditions of his see and its saint in an explicit statement of spiritual and temporal possessions, rights and privileges. He gave form to the myth of St James as the apostle of Spain and provided a clear focus for the pilgrimage. As a result, the earlier history of the cult of St James and its pilgrims, then its importance to the kings of that is certain is that the idea that St James evangelized Spain first appears in the eighth century; and the notion that he was buried at Compostela only emerged after the discovery, about 830, of an early Christian *martirium* or holy man's grave on the site of the future cathedral. Imperfectly excavated in the nineteenth century, it is a characteristic fourteenth-century tomb. But in the ninth century, its mortal remains were identified as the body of St James: their real identity is unknown.

St James: their real identity is unknown. Though one plausible if irrelevant suggestion has been that they belong to the heretic Priscillian, a Galician executed in 386. By 900 the cult had become part of the Leonese kings' hold over Galicia; by 950 the first foreign pilgrims were making the hazardous journey to Compostela; guidebooks and collections of miracles followed in due course. In the tenth century, kings and saints rose together, and supernatural power was closely allied to royal authority.

If the Reconquista was irrelevant to the early pilgrims, then its importance to all Christian Spain may have been exaggerated too. Future historians will need to pay less attention to the comparatively well-documented urban centres and relatively rural landscapes of northern Spain. Anyone interested in Spain will find much to ponder in this elegant, sparsely written book.

## Hangers-on

Louis Allen

SHUSAKU ENDO  
Stained Glass Elegies  
Translated by Van L. Gessel  
165pp. Peter Owen. £7.95.  
0720606292

*Stained Glass Elegies*, a group of eleven short stories put together from two Japanese collections, deals with themes familiar from *Silence* and *The Samurai*; and others strangely and startlingly different. Most of the "heroes" are Catholics, not convinced believers, but hangers-on to an etiolated set of beliefs and practices inherited from their mothers.

"A Forty-Year Old Man" undergoes lung surgery and asks his wife to bring a myna bird to the hospital. He is visited by his sister-in-law, who has been his mistress and has aborted his child. He remembers going to confession to a foreign priest whose breath was as foul as the

myna bird's cage; just as the cage's gridwork recalls that of the confessional. He tries to teach the bird "Good morning", but the bird cannot say it, any more than he could bring himself to confess the adultery and abortion. Egi, "The Despicable Bastard", lives in a Christian student dormitory in war-time Tokyo. A group of students visits a leper colony to entertain the patients. The visit ends with a baseball game in which Egi, who has a gash on his knee and is terrified of being infected, sprints to base and is halted in his tracks by the thought of colliding with the leper baseman. The leper sees what is going through his mind and says softly, "Go ahead. I won't touch you". In "My Belongings", Suguro is baptized because his aunt thinks it's a good idea. Instead of shedding Christianity in adult life, he finds that his internal Christ takes on with him "the sunken grizzled face of middle age". Suguro, who has married unromantically, tells his wife he never really wanted her, and as he watches the tears streaming down her face he discovers

## Brothers in corruption

Patrick McCarthy

LEONARDO SCIASCIA  
The Day of the Owl and Equal Danger  
Translated by Archibald Colquhoun and  
Arthur Oliver; and Adrienne Foulke  
126pp. Manchester: Carcanet. £7.95.  
086335666

It is surprising that Leonardo Sciascia's novels are not better known in the Anglo-Saxon world, both because he is surely, along with Italo Calvino, Italy's finest prose-writer and because his books are superficially, albeit deceptively, simple. Many of them are in the form of detective stories in which the crime is gradually obscured rather than explained, and the detective rather than the criminal is punished.

*The Day of the Owl* (1961) depicts a policeman from northern Italy, Bellodi, who is endeavouring to solve a Sicilian murder. He makes good progress until he encounters a mafioso protected by high-ranking politicians in Rome; at this point a fog of obscurity descends and the policeman admits defeat. *Equal Danger* (1971) is a more complex novel; the detective, Rogas, pursues a murderer of judges only to discover that the ruling élite is manipulating the killings. Blaming them on New Left terrorists and exploiting the climate of fear, the Rome politicians are preparing either a *coup d'état* or a grand alliance between the Christian Democrats and the Communists or else the two things at once.

In the background of Sciascia's books lurk the men of power who are the real agents of evil, even if they cannot control it and may themselves become victims of violence. They appear to the reader via fragments of conversation, telephone calls and brief allusions. Since they stand both inside and outside history it is tempting to interpret Sciascia's novels in political terms, although this is another false trail down which he sends us.

Certainly readers who are interested in Italian politics will have no trouble recognizing in *Equal Danger* references to the historic compromise, to New Left militants who talk revolution but are thoroughly bourgeois, and most of all to the Christian Democrats whose power is based on organized corruption. And, while Sciascia seems, like almost everyone else in Italy at the time, to have underestimated the importance of the Red Brigades who were, at least in part, a new and independent form of evil, *Equal Danger* may be read as an oblique

in its latest issue - heralded by the slightly misleading theme, "After the Revolution" - *Grania* (272pp. Penguin. £3.50, 0140075666) contains the good habit of publishing Milan Kundera. "Paris or Prague" includes a brief examination of his fellow-Czech novelist, Josef Škvorecký, who is himself represented by a short story, "Miracles". (Excerpted from the novel *Miracle in Bohemia*, by any chance? *Grania* is sometimes curiously short of elementary information.) Issue Number Thirteen also prints some entries from the infamous *Diaries of Jane Sommers* together with Doris

behind it the face of "that Man". He will never leave her, and for the same reason never leave his Christ: "I have tormented you the same way I have tormented my wife. I'm not at all sure that I will not go on abusing you as I do her. But I will never cast you off utterly."

The stories are peopled with self-indulgent moral weaklings, afraid of physical pain, accustomed (like Endo himself) to massive surgery and long bouts in hospital, remorseful and Christ-haunted. They are not lapsed Catholics, they are inadequate, rather, and the sense of their inadequacy is pointed up by Endo's fascination with the Christian martyrs of sixteenth-century Japan, who stand out in sharp contrast to the timid apostates of their own day and the flaccid half-believers of the present.

The hero of "Mothers" has been brought up by a woman abandoned by her husband (there is autobiography here, too) and one day arrives home to find his mother dead. He had been delayed on the way, scrutinizing a friend's pornographic photos. He visits the remnants of early Catholic settlements on the fringes of Southern Japan, the islands off Kyushu where "hidden Christians" (*kakure Kirishitan*) survived persecution by outwardly conforming, but hid statues of the Virgin Mary behind the family Buddha and observed the Christian festivals as well as compulsorily attending the local temple. These people still live as outsiders. The local Catholics have little to do with them, and they shun newcomers, refusing to marry outside their own kind, and claim their brand of Catholicism to be the true one. But it is not their stubborn endurance which interests him; rather the fact that they are the offspring of apostates: "Like their ancestors, they cannot utterly abandon their faith; instead they live out their lives, consumed by remorse and dark quiet and shame."

Suguro (the name recurs), in "Unzen", visits a commonplace little town on the edge of Kyushu, home of many of the Christians hideously tortured to death after the Shimabara rebellion in 1636. During the journey he

reads Collado's *Confessions*, and speculates on the difference between the unshakable faith of the martyrs and his own spiritual feebleness. But one man in the *Confessions* was like him: an apostate who abandoned his faith to save his wife and children, but was irresistibly drawn to the hot springs where the torturers took place, and watched his former companions die. A single phrase from the *Confessions* pierces Suguro's heart: "The apostate endures a pain none of you can comprehend."

Professor Van Gessel, Endo's correct if somewhat wooden translator, indicates in a note that Endo's range is far greater than the six novels currently available in translation show. Endo is also a comic writer, and "Incredible Voyage" signals a totally different talent. It's a spoof of the film *Fantastic Voyage*, in which a diminished Raquel Welch explores the inside of a human body. In the year 2005, Dr Yamazato Bontarō, similarly reduced by microgamma rays, boards a mini-submarine which is injected into the bloodstream of a girl, Sayuri, whom he much admires, to operate - successfully - on a cancerous growth. Things go wrong. The submarine pilot celebrates intemperately and loses his way. The surgeons find themselves bobbing up and down Sayuri's intestine and discover to their dismay that no pre-operative enema has been administered. They are reduced to leaving their craft and hacking their way with a surgical scalpel through a vast turd. Fending off an attack by a gigantic threadworm, they approach the anus and liberation only to realize they are too weak to force their way through. They hit on the idea of tickling the bowel wall and are blown out on the typhoon force of Sayuri's fart. Suitably enlarged, Bontarō visits his patient a few days later, but there is no Swiftian upshot. Love wins out over physiology, Endo tells us, tongue firmly installed in cheek.

There is a great fund of Endo's humour still to be explored. It would be good to have more of it, with some of his essays on religion, literature and love, and his student days in France.

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# Among the sweating soldiery

**Lindsay Duguid**

**BARBARA KER WILSON**  
*Jane Austen in Australia*  
330pp. Secker and Warburg. £8.95.  
0436577003  
**JOAN AIKEN**  
*Mansfield Revisited*  
183pp. Gollancz. £7.95.  
0575 035374  
**JOHN WHEATCROFT**  
*Catherine, Her Book*  
179pp. New York: Cornwall Books. £9.50.  
08453 4742 X

*Jane Austen in Australia* has the novelist accompanying her aunt Jane Leigh Perrot on a visit to New South Wales in the year 1804-5, a year unrecorded in Jane Austen's letters. The fact that she was arrested, tried and acquitted of stealing lace from a shop in Bath in 1799 leads to the supposition that, having naturally contemplated the prospect of an enforced visit to England's penal colony, Mrs Leigh Perrot should then decide to go there on an expedition with her naturalist husband; it is further supposed that Jane Austen was at this time heartbroken at the death of the man she had hoped to marry and was therefore invited to go along. Thus she soon has her first sight of Table Bay; becomes prey to flies; hobnobs with an aborigine; and is somewhat attracted to a former highwayman.

These suppositions are dealt with in the early chapters of the book, which depict unexceptional scenes in Stevenson, Sidmouth and Bath - painted with a delicate wash of Georgette Heyer. Other episodes take place in the Austen household and in lodgings near the Angel where Mrs Leigh Perrot is committed for several months before her trial. These last are far from bloodless: brightly coloured and highly atmospheric, thick with thieves' cant, the smell of mutton chops and the conversation of the rather Dickensian Seadling family. Despite this, though, there is a feeling that the novel is somewhat artificial, as if the author has recycled to make a convincing story. The party sets sail and the voyage itself, *via* Rio and the Cape, occasions a larger cast of characters and more freedom in the writing;

discussions of slavery, prognostications of "machines for sewing" in a new industrial age, a history of the colony.

In New South Wales itself - first in Sydney, then in Parramatta - the slight figure of Jane Austen almost disappears against a background of Antipodean vigour - "the dust, the pigs tethered along the Tank Stream, the piles of refuse, the toiling convict gangs, the sweating soldiery". Here too is a dangerous social freedom, for the English visitors live at close quarters with prostitutes, convict-servants and "emancipists": even the higher stratum includes duellists, drunken judge-advocates and brave pioneer wives. Reverberations of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars are in the air and the only news of England is a six-month-old warning, relayed by American newspapers, of an invasion by the French.

The second half of the book moves at a brisk pace: Barbara Ker Wilson's rich material gets a little out of hand when there is an uprising of Irish convicts and Jane Austen sails back to England to work on *Sense and Sensibility*. Leaving aside the question of whether the book offers a true portrait of the artist (she is shown as both roguish and opinionated), we are given an enjoyable account of early Australian life and an original view of early nineteenth-century English history. Despite occasional anachronisms of expression *Jane Austen in Australia* offers some rewarding contrasts; incongruity is part of its appeal.

It is not incongruity but artificiality that makes Joan Aiken's *Mansfield Revisited* so unsatisfactory. In recounting the fortunes of Fanny's younger sister Susan - who figured in the original novel as a hoydenish teenager removed in her turn from the contamination of Plymouth - Joan Aiken has tried to make capital out of the Bertram family and their dependants. Of the original cast, only Lady Bertram remains unchanged. Sir Thomas and Mrs Norris (who might have presented a stronger challenge to the author) are both dead, Fanny and Edmund are absent in the West Indies, and the reformed Heir and the reformed Heir and the reformed Heir are unrecognizable. Two new characters, Mrs Osborne and Mr Wadham, are taken from stock: the former loosely based on the character of Mrs Croft in *Persuasion*; the latter an insubstantial gentle-

man and possible suitor for Susan. What becomes of them all is, despite a death, three proposals, and first-hand news of Maria's adulterous adventures, a flat concoction.

Putting it together Aiken employs some more-or-less period language ("I am persuaded, ma'am", continued Edmund Bertram with half a smile...) and turns some Austenish tricks (a ball, to be belle of, a disappointing picnic, a gravel walk) but the whole does not ring true. Unlike Barbara Ker Wilson, Aiken makes nothing of her own from the original material. The scene-setting is not implausible, the characters are not grotesquely wrong, but we still feel affronted that *Mansfield Park* should have been capitalized on in this way.

Purportedly the journal of the young Catherine Earnshaw, discovered and rewritten by her after her marriage to Edgar Linton, *Catherine, Her Book* has a single viewpoint and a single voice. As an object, the journal is carefully authentic. It is written in four ancient volumes of the works of John Bunyan; "tiny hieroglyphs adorned or defaced the... volumes. I began to decipher the tiny letters." Catherine Earnshaw, her book. July 24, 1774. Heathcliff was being punished." The novel consists of Catherine's personal account of Heathcliff, Hindley, Nelly and Joseph at Wuthering Heights, an account which has more affinities with a soap opera than Emily Brontë's novel. Nelly and Hindley are lovers, as are Catherine and Heathcliff; Nelly and Heathcliff are Mr Earnshaw's illegitimate children; Catherine watches Nelly and Hindley making love; Catherine and Heathcliff make love on the moors; their love is forbidden since they are really brother and sister; Edgar is "the gentlest and most understanding of husbands" and so on. The claustrophobic unreality of these reminiscences is increased by the narrator's tone, which is that of a breathless teenager. There is a series of "discoveries" of a sensational sort which ends with a brooding "Codicil", dated Thrushcross Grange, September 30, 1783, about "the little leap of life in my womb" and predicting "something in me will split and my own life will go on leaking out in crimson. Accepting my death as I do, I know because I will it that I shall not die before I come to term." This at least disposes of any doubts about the future.

Intelligent and passionate; by her rich use of symbols and metaphor she transforms feminist cliché into something alive and moving. Her poetic gifts, which turned the screw of intensity rather uncomfortably in her two semi-autobiographical novels (*A Piece of the Night* and *The Visitation*), are seen to better advantage here. The shadow of the author speaking about herself and other women is often felt, especially in the descriptions of Mary laboriously writing her book; but when she is more oblique Roberts says more about women's condition without seeming to wallow in self-pity.

In *Nuns and Mothers*, a joke but vulnerable heroine explores her Catholic and American past through an intense lesbian affair. Helena is the heroine, with husband and children in England, Georgia the long-suffering American lover with whom she revisits her childhood sites. Both were at Stella Maris convent, which was "so filled with Sapphic emotion, with volatile female passion, it would ignite at so much as a syllable of any explicit word like 'lesbian'." The book is funny and perceptive, especially about nuns, mothers and the shifting insecurities of the relationship between the two women. Structurally it is clever too - layers of the past, childhood, the convent and their brief affair after it, are revealed in a lovers' game of retelling significant events to each other like a litany. The author is keen to find a language (she would make a pun on the word) for lesbian sex - too keen for my taste. But what is a feminist writer to do? Remaking oneself (and other people) by remaking one's past in a novel must seem tempting: too many people have done it, as if it were an essential rite for joining the sisterhood. But Aileen La Tourette's novel - her first - is accomplished enough to please even uninitiated readers.

At least, I think this is what happens. Like all the best revelations, the book is obscure. Its obscurity is part of an intentional complexity. Some feminists will find in it a convincing message for their new religion. Michelle Roberts is

# Mating song

**Linda Taylor**

**JULIA O'FAOLAIN**  
*The Irish Signorina*  
187pp. Viking. £7.95.  
0670 800422

"... this villa was the setting for a sixteenth-century dialogue on love... Platonic love mostly then written up by some humanist... A poet's game" he apologized.

The villa, owned by the ageing Marchese Niccolosa Cavalcanti, is in Tuscany; a young Irish woman, Anne, is the guest of the Marchese. Once more, the villa is the setting for a dialogue on love - a debate which embraces a whole network of complexities involving family ties, political affiliations, the recent and the ancient past.

*The Irish Signorina* begins and ends with mourning. Between death and death, the lives of the characters are filled with ghosts. The Cavalcanti family is steeped in its own past: the name of the Marchese's son, Guido, is a remembrance of the fourteenth-century poet, the friend of Dante whose canzone on the nature of love was studied as a philosophical treatise. Guido's son, a revolutionary, is called Neri, recalling the "Black" faction in Florence, opposed to the Bianchi, of whom the original Guido became leader. These hints of old debates and opinions, of battles and allegiances, are central (if obscurely so) to the way in which Julia O'Faolain's latest novel grapples with the nature of life. On the one hand there are compromises, lies, patchings up, dullness, death and marriage; on the other, passion, terrorism, change, wildness and sex. Anne's own parents (both dead) took opposing sides: "her mother had an unsafe laugh and her husband, the bomb expert, had handled her with care." Too careful of the wife who craved passion but had married him for safety, the bomb expert died when a bomb he was defusing exploded in his hands. The mother, in fact, was a spent shell, her energy all wasted in a love affair with Guido which began twenty-five years before Anne's present visit to the villa.

The plot - Anne falls in love with Guido who turns out to be her real father while Neri involves her, marginally, in a terrorist conspiracy - provides the bones for the real stuff of the novel: the debate between romanticism and rationalism, in which the characters are more at war with themselves than, as they seem to be, with one another. "Judicious, practical and controlled" (according to Niccolosa), Anne "still found herself arguing with" the ghost of her mother "who was by now an extension of herself. The impulse to identify or reject... made memory narcissistic. It was like giving your attention to someone wearing mirror sun glasses."

Is it more passionate, the novel asks, to love spiritually, as in the old Count Bonaccorso's obsessive platonic feeling for Niccolosa, or lustfully, as in Anne and Neri's comforting night on the library floor? (Is passion, anyway, a part of love?) Or is it better to reject idealism and lust for the pragmatic alliance - money, property and safety as the basis for marriage? O'Faolain provides no answers - everyone in the novel is defeated, cheated by life (its moral appetites and energies) or God (God is love, or is He?) or fervour (political factions are beset by infiltrators and cover-ups). Guido, the skillful lawyer, unhappily, pragmatically married, preaches that love is ennobling. Bonaccorso sees "all that spew Guido had tossed forth [as] nothing but a mating song" - to catch Anne. Anne, the rationalist, plans to turn to the wind; to disregard taboos of incest; to live, as all the Tuscany seem to live, by stealth and lies; to marry (?) Guido.

Cavalcanti the poet affirmed humanity, with its impetus to passion and violence. He gave man a country, a vocation, a political party, a family, a character - the language of realism, philosophically and artistically displayed. Six centuries later, realism has lost its liberating spark. O'Faolain's characters, cynical, depressed and oppressed, are unconvinced by their own philosophical arguments; the world she portrays is dark, convoluted, Machiavellian. As Guido says to his mother and Anne: "we three, laughing over our champagne... are in a long and pessimistic tradition. Our life is sad laughter."

# Fielding a full eleven

**Reginald Hill**

**BERNARD BENSTOCK (Editor)**  
*Essays on Detective Fiction*  
218pp. Macmillan. £10.  
0333 321952

**GLADYS MITCHELL**  
*The Saltmarsh Murders*  
287pp. Hogarth Press. £7.95 (paperback, £3.95).

**REX STOUT**  
*The Hand in the Glove*  
284pp. Hogarth Press. £7.95 (paperback, £3.95).

**RAY HARRISON**  
*Death of an Honourable Member*  
154pp. Quartet. £7.50.

**RUTH DUDLEY EDWARDS**  
*The Saint Valentine's Day Murders*  
181pp. Quartet. £7.95.

**JOHN GREENWOOD**  
*Mosley by Moonlight*  
150pp. Quartet. £7.95.

07045 24326

In *Essays on Detective Fiction*, eleven critics take on eleven crime writers, man and wife counting as one flesh in both teams. The editor Bernard Benstock puts himself in last, wisely perhaps as well as modestly, since his essay (not naturally) follows the diktat of his editorial introduction with an exemplary precision some of his team find hard to match. In this introduction he pleads that the *auteur* theory so fashionable a little while ago in film criticism might provide a useful approach to detective fiction, and in his own essay on Sjöwall and Wahlöf's Martin Beck, this works beautifully. Benstock is helped, however, by an aspect of the Beck novels which he admits is rare in detective fiction, namely that the authors have set out consciously to analyse the condition of their society through the series.

Such an aim is not, of course, a prerequisite of "serious" fiction, but it helps, and the difference between literature as social critique and literature as sociological evidence can be marked by setting this closing essay alongside the opener on Agatha Christie. It is Christie and the other Great Puzzlers who present the problem central to serious criticism of the genre. The pulp can be ignored, but not the big-name best-sellers, so inconsistencies creep in from the start as one critic adopts a socio-historical stance (as here in the Christie essay), while another praises the intellectual puzzles (as in the essay on Dorothy Sayers), and a third makes claims to absolute literary merit and genuine re-readability (as in the essay on Ngaio Marsh). None of these essays is without interest and insight, but there is a perceptible and significant change of gear as the collection moves on from the British (*pace* Marsh) to the American dead. Hammett and Chandler surely no longer need any special pleading on their behalf. By almost any critical test, they are fine writers and the essays here get to grips with the nature of their achievement in a workmanlike way. In their slip-stream comes a third private-eye novelist, Ross Macdonald, whose work I have always felt to be dangerously overrated, so it is perhaps not surprising that I found the essay on him distressingly overwritten.

The living English, P. D. James and Peter Lovesey, are treated fairly if a little dully, and then we end up with the Continentals, in which group I include the expatriate Nicholas Freeling, who has done more for our sense of Europe than fifty Councils of Ministers. The Freeling essay is limited to the Van der Valk novels, and his author, Carol Shloss, keeps her eye firmly on her chosen topic, which is the novelist's examination of the "official world", but all the time we can feel other aspects of this complex author crowding in. Similarly, Pierre Weis's essay on Simenon has to pick its way carefully through the profusion of material offered by this prolific, productive of writers. And so we return to Professor Benstock's meticulous and fascinating account of Martin Beck's career.

*Auteur* theory aside, it's hard not to end up judging, in terms of absolute talent, and perhaps the truth is that crime writing still finds it hard to field a full eleven at the highest level.

Nevertheless *Essays on Detective Fiction* demonstrates yet again that there are many openers of international class and, dropping down to minor county level, there is a profusion of talent few other literary sub-genres can begin to match.

The combination of such richness of talent with an equal richness of productivity can result in much that is valuable and entertaining sinking deep beyond ready recovery. The Hogarth Crime reprint series has been launched to rescue the "unjustly neglected", itself often a questionable concept, but one more than justified here by Hogarth's first two resuscitations. Gladys Mitchell, whose output of over sixty crime novels almost predetermines neglect, is represented by *The Saltmarsh Murders*, a lively spoof of the "Guilt at the Vicarage" tradition, narrated by a Wodehousian curate who muddles about on the fringes of a crime involving murder, smuggling, bastardy, secret passages and a whole host of dotty characters till the dotiest of them all, not-yet-Dame Beatrice Adela LeStrange Bradley, acts as both God and His instrument in putting things to rights. Here is sheer delight, almost equalled in the other Hogarth reprint, Rex Stout's *The Hand in the Glove*. Never having been much of a Nero Wolfe fan, I was relieved to find that this featured another of his detectives, intrigued to discover that this was a female gumshoe called Dol Bonner, and delighted to be plunged into a 1930s private-eye world well up to snuff in terms of wise-cracking, punchy prose and high society mayhem. Both books have introductions by Mary Cadogan and Patricia Craig, informative enough to interest the *aficionado*, yet short enough not to deter the casual searcher after a good read. Stout and Mitchell are minor county players without a doubt, but re-readable in a way that many pre-war successes in the big league of the "serious novel" will never be.

Harrison's experience in the Inland Revenue's fraud squad obviously stands him in good stead in his writing, and Ruth Dudley Edwards is another who dips into her store of professional experience for her material, though how long she can continue putting her civil servant hero, Robert Amiss, in the way of murder might prove problematic. Already, in *The Saint Valentine's Day Murders*, she is undertaking the difficult task of implanting the crime novel of character with the kind of often rather dotty crime so beloved of the Great Puzzlers. What happens is that Robert Amiss, seconded to the British Conservation Corporation, finds himself put in charge of Purchasing

# Criminal proceedings

**T. J. Binyon**

**ELIZABETH IRONSIDE**  
*A Very Private Enterprise*  
256pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £8.95.  
0340 352698

When Hugo Frencham, a senior diplomat with the British High Commission in New Delhi, is murdered, security officer George Sinclair is sent out to sweep the ends under the carpet. But the mess refuses to be tidied up. George discovers a possible defector in the Russian embassy, makes an enemy of an Indian war hero, falls in love with a postgraduate student of Tibetan culture and visits Ladakh with her. A really excellent first novel: original and interesting characters, great atmosphere, good action, and a genuine surprise in the tail.

**MICHAEL DELAHAYE**  
*The Third Day*  
300pp. Constable. £7.95.  
009 4653402

It is 1989; the new US president has threatened to withdraw all military and economic aid from Israel if the territories taken from the Arabs in 1967 are not returned. But the Israelis have an incomparable blackmail weapon at hand, with which they can force the Vatican to put pressure on the States: they have discovered the skeleton of a man crucified in the first century AD. A more than competent thriller with a good, well-executed plot, *The Third Day* is on a much larger scale than Michael Delahaye's excellent first novel *The Sale of Lot 236*, but in the process of growth has lost a good deal of the earlier book's individual originality.

**H. R. P. KEATINGE**  
*The Sheriff of Bombay*  
211pp. Collins. £6.95.  
000 2317354

While engaged on the embarrassing task of escorting an ageing British film star round the slums of Bombay, Inspector Ghote stumbles across the still-warm body of a prostitute; in the subsequent investigation his normal sense of social inferiority becomes almost unbearable when his chief suspect turns out to be the famous Randhir Singh - known, justifiably, as Randy - the Rajah of Dhar, Sheriff of Bombay, former captain of the Indian cricket team and idol of the public. Vintage Ghote, splendidly told, with real feeling for the inspector's predicaments.

Quartet are also building up an interesting crime list and are now publishing second novels by the writers on their original list. In *Death of an Honourable Member*, Ray Harrison offers another case involving Victorian City of London police detective, Sergeant Bragg, who is by Cribb out of Cuff, and none the worse for that. Here he is instructed by the Commissioner to enquire with discretion into the death of a City MP which the coroner has already, and perhaps over-hastily, adjudged to be accidental. Nicely paired with Constable Morton, son of the Lord Lieutenant of Kent, player of first class cricket, and shoulder-rubber of the highest in the land, including the PM who is personally interested in the present case, Bragg proceeds with caution but also with dogged persistence. Readers who like their Victorian reconstructions served up with a pea-soup of atmosphere may be disappointed here. Harrison does not omit authenticating detail but he is more concerned with narrative pace than local colour. The guilty party turns out to be the most obvious suspect, but this doesn't matter as the whys and wherefores are woven into such a complex pattern that our attention is always held, while the interstices are filled with gently amusing sketches of a policeman's lot.

Harrison's experience in the Inland Revenue's fraud squad obviously stands him in good stead in his writing, and Ruth Dudley Edwards is another who dips into her store of professional experience for her material, though how long she can continue putting her civil servant hero, Robert Amiss, in the way of murder might prove problematic. Already, in *The Saint Valentine's Day Murders*, she is undertaking the difficult task of implanting the crime novel of character with the kind of often rather dotty crime so beloved of the Great Puzzlers. What happens is that Robert Amiss, seconded to the British Conservation Corporation, finds himself put in charge of Purchasing

offerings must surely be given to John Greenwood's *Mosley by Moonlight*. Detective Inspector Mosley, whose patch is located where the Pennines straddle the Yorks-Lancs border, is a splendid creation. Regarded by his superiors as sometimes a Machiavel, often a clown, and always a nuisance, he takes care of crime in his constituency, rarely resorting to the charge sheet, and a comic highpoint of the book is reached when these same superiors find themselves faced with a sudden inrush of crime reports from Mosley, all concerned with local dignitaries who are accused of offences ranging from "exposing for sale a native leveret in the month of June" to "whilst acting as street collector for charity, being accompanied by an animal". Their hopes that there may be the first signs of a breakdown which will lead to early retirement are quickly dashed as Mosley reveals he is after larger game, to wit, the truth at the centre of the mystery surrounding the disappearance of a would-be squire's unhappy wife and the parallel disappearance of his obliging German "housekeeper" five years later. Witty, literate and nicely observed, with good round characters, shrewd detection and not a little suspense, *Mosley by Moonlight* is a perfect example of the old English craft of country comedy. All the proper pleasures of detective fiction are here, plus the transforming bonus of genuine laughter.

addition is no slouch at putting one word after another to provoke a giggle, it's a pity sentimentality and self-indulgence have been allowed to dominate.

**ED MCBAIN**  
*Jack and the Beanstalk*  
250pp. Hamish Hamilton. £8.95.  
0241 112702

Given the boot by his girl-friend Dale O'Brien - she of the glade-green eyes - Florida lawyer Matthew Hope soon replaces her with a delectable blonde farmer old enough to be his mother. And at the same time involves himself in a couple of nasty murders and some very dubious business deals. This is the fifth Ed McBain novel set in Florida with a fairy-tale title and Matthew Hope as its hero: like its predecessors, it is slick, entertaining and professional. But there is still a school of thought which wonders why on earth McBain should waste his time writing about Florida when the 87th Precinct is still available.

**GLADYS MITCHELL**  
*The Crozier Pharaohs*  
189pp. Michael Joseph. £7.95.  
07181 24723

Gladys Mitchell died last July at the age of eighty-two; *The Crozier Pharaohs* is the third and last of her books to be published posthumously; it brings the total, since *Speedy Death* in 1929, to the extremely impressive number of sixty-six. It cannot honestly be said that there is a great deal of detection in this story of two sisters, Bryony and Morpeth Rant, who breed Pharaoh hounds, originally the hunting dogs of Egyptian kings and nobles and therefore undoubtedly the oldest domesticated dogs in the world; whose Labrador, Seklmer, is stolen; which leads to the discovery of one corpse with head bashed in and another with throat cut. But the novel is as elegantly written, as unmistakably Mitchellian as ever; and devotees will get a great deal of pleasure from the conversations between Dame Beatrice LeStrange Bradley and her athletic assistant, Laura Gavin.

John Co. 1516



# In tune with the texture

## Christopher Wintle

MICHAEL HALL  
Harrison Birtwistle  
186pp. Robson. £8.95.  
0860512703

An air of incredulity accompanied the emergence of Harrison Birtwistle as a composer during the 1960s. He began his professional musical life as a school-teacher, flopping around Cranborne Chase in carpet-slippers, playing jazz on the clarinet to the girls, and writing scores that were notorious for their rhythmic complexities. After this, he devoted himself entirely to composition, and, winning a fellowship, travelled to America in the company, allegedly, of a large number of toy instruments, with which he appears to have shown a Ravel-like obsession. The Establishment were astonished by his name and appearance alike, and many academic feathers were ruffled by his claim that he could happily rewrite his music using different notes without doing any essential damage to it. His early works, too, included baffling failures as well as some undeniable successes: if *Monodrama* and *Three Lessons in a Frame* (both 1967) seemed inept, then the remarkable and exhilarating *Tragoedia* (1965) established the extremes that his later works have explored so tenaciously: a shrill, iconoclastic violence on the one hand, and an uncanny, lyrical repose on the other. Yet even the appearance of so many new scores in recent years has not dispelled the old doubts, and the works can still seem as much triumphs of idiosyncrasy as of musical learning.

Something of this incredulity is shared by Michael Hall in this preliminary, but timely, monograph (Birtwistle was fifty this year). "Could this musical system survive the ravages of time", he asks at the end of some slightly obscure analysis of . . . *agm* . . . a work based on the Sappho fragments rescued from "the ruins of a ruined world". "You are the only one who has been able to do this!" It is a highly pertinent question, and one that elicits an articulate response from the composer in the closing pages of the book. In his aesthetic, Birtwistle seeks for no innate continuity between a basic musical shape and the larger musical idea, an attitude that contrasts sharply with the essentially nineteenth-century view of Schoenberg and his followers. Rather, his vision of the whole appears to relate primarily to the characteristics of musical textures and their juxtapositions. The notes themselves are often derived at random (Birtwistle hoards old computer print-outs), and are absorbed into their larger contexts only after being subjected to various kinds of permutation, articulation and modification. (These processes are sometimes so elaborate as to remain inscrutable.) Like other composers of this century, he justifies his aesthetic by drawing analogies with other arts, especially sculpture, where he sees the raw materials preserving their identity, whatever the shapes may be that are derived from, or imposed upon, them. Most importantly, perhaps, he considers that this sense of the *otherness* of his own materials releases him from a dependence upon intuition for the generation of his basic shapes. Intuition, in his view, merely regurgitates what it has already absorbed.

It would be nice to think that this exposition of *the* *we* could allay the anxieties of critics. In effect, it is more likely to sharpen the ambivalence of their response. And Hall himself is better at dealing with the background to Birtwistle's visions — Greek tragedy, classical mythology, early English drama, painting and cinema — than with the more directly musical issues. He conveys a good impression of the music's immediacy but draws insufficient comparisons with other composers to put Birtwistle's aesthetic into an appropriate context.

Instead, he relies too heavily on binary oppositions to reinforce his central thesis that Birtwistle is perpetually recomposing the same piece. Thus we have Bergson's clock time and intuitive time, Jung's ego and group consciousness, Oristelli's right and left hemispheres of the brain . . . the list proliferates. It is true that some encouragement for this line of argument may have been derived from Peter Zinkov's

bizarre libretto for Birtwistle's as yet unperformed opera, *The Mask of Orpheus* — a work, needless to say, about "life and death, fact and fantasy . . . Man (or Hero) and Myth", enacted upon two stage levels conjoined by two rivers, "one horizontal, the other vertical" (*sic*). But in general, these oppositions are left too unrefined. The forms, for example, may be static, but the effect of the large scores of the 1970s is often powerfully teleological. And Birtwistle himself seems not to have entertained the thought that the literal restatements of Messiaen's scores, far from representing impoverished composition, create tension precisely by denying the impulse for organic change.

Apart from this, Hall's work is spirited rather than thorough. There are some good minor works that go unexplored, especially the haunting film-score for Sidney Lumet's *The Offence* (1973). Webern's early music, which Birtwistle taught at the Royal Academy of Music, should be cited as an important source for the handling of monody. Nevertheless, it is good that there is, at last, a study of this composer, and that its useful catalogue of works has also been issued independently by Birtwistle's music publishers, Universal Edition.

## From the outside

### Eric Sams

WALTER FRISCH (Editor)  
Johannes Brahms: Alto Rhapsody, Opus 53  
A facsimile of the autograph score  
76pp. The New York Public Library;  
distributed by Publishing Center for Cultural  
Resources, 625 Broadway, New York,  
NY 10012, USA. \$50.  
0871042835

As his choice of song-texts shows, Brahms had a special fondness for mothers and daughters and their confidential conversations; he was also much obsessed with thoughts of isolation, exclusion and loneliness. At the confluence of all these highly personal feelings we find the *Alto Rhapsody* of 1869, inspired by his frustratingly divisive love for Clara Schumann and her twenty-three-year-old daughter Julie. Neither was for him; he always remained the longing loner, the sad outsider. To attain the intense verbal inwardness he needed, Brahms gutted Goethe's obscure elegy of ostracism *Harzreise im Winter*. The three stanzas thus arbitrarily excerpted are far more self-expressive than self-explanatory; their abrupt beginning, for example, "But who is this to one side?", must be music's most perplexing plunge in *medias res*. So here is a work much in need of commentary, with a manuscript long overdue for illumination. The only extant autograph belongs to the New York Public Library, which issued

## Hotter gossip

### Michael Tanner

FENELOPE TURING  
Hans Hotter: Man and artist  
280pp. Calder. £10.95  
0714539880

A good critical biography of Hans Hotter would be a valuable book. He made his debut as the Speaker in *Die Zauberflöte* in 1930, and last year scored a "sensational success" as Schigolch in *Lulu* in Vienna; anyone who heard the broadcast might well have wondered why he isn't still singing Gurnemann. He has lived and worked through a period in which styles of operatic production, ways of interpreting Lied, and the reputation of Wagner, with whom he has always been most closely associated, though not by his own wish, have all changed radically. As well as being a superb singer, actor, he has produced many operas with considerable success, and for the last decade or so has held master-classes which are notable for the extraordinary inspiration he generates. He is so intelligent, articulate, warm, wide-ranging and humane, and above all so keen that the participants in his classes

# Comings and goings

## Rupert Christiansen

RICHARD BURBANK  
Twentieth Century Music  
485pp. Thames and Hudson. £20.  
0500013349

Chronology is no longer the dominating principle in our conceptions of history, and the flat-footedness of a book like this, relentlessly plodding through twentieth-century music, can only reinforce the prejudice against it. Dividing each year under the headings of "Opera", "Dance", "Instrumental and Vocal", "Births, Deaths, and Debuts" and "Related Events", it gives day-by-day listings of what Richard Burbank has considered to be significant musical comings and goings. Lavishly produced, well indexed, and generally accurate, it turns out to be almost completely useless as a reference book and not even good value as an entertaining browse.

A primary objection to the volume is its false identification of the epoch of "modern music" with "the twentieth century". If we are to have a chronology of modern music, then we ought to have a starting-point rather more seminal

this facsimile edition as part of the 150th Brahms anniversary celebrations. Its forty-four clearly reproduced pages, with the various touches of pen, pencil and crayon well-defined and differentiated, are augmented by two sketch leaves from a Vienna collection and prefaced by a twenty-page account of the work's genesis, structure and sources, together with a technical description of the manuscript.

Such publications make masterpieces doubly accessible, by reproduction and by commentary. They also provide a show-case for the display of modern musicology. Walter Frisch has provided an exemplary model of what needs to be said and how to say it. That makes the occasional slight blemishes all the more unfortunate. Goethe's text is inadequately translated (among other infelicities, "ward" is "became" rather than "was", and "vernehmlich" is just "audible", not "pleasing") and inaccurately punctuated. Commas may seem small points; but fifty dollars is a tidy sum. For that money, we might also have been told that not only the first four but the last four notes of "ach, wer hellet die Schmerzen" are a thematic transformation of the opening motif. Again, the adagio melody is not just used as the chaconne bass of the *Neue Liebeslieder* finale but also sung there, surely with a deliberate verbal and personal significance well worth elucidating. In general, though, the essential tasks of promulgation and exegesis are definitively discharged by this edition, which other learned libraries should follow in every sense.

should develop their own performing personalities, that he provides a most welcome contrast to other celebrated practitioners.

What is most important now is to listen to Hotter's records: to hear his Wotan (on one of the complete cycles of the *Ring* from Bayreuth published by Melodram; where he is much better accompanied, and has far finer colleagues, than on the Decca *Ring*) is to realize immediately how absurd current productions of the work are in which Wotan is portrayed as a weak and broken figure. Equally important, to hear any of his four recordings of *Die Winterreise* is to be reminded of the importance of maintaining a line, a clear legato in the classic tradition, which credits the listener with enough intelligence to understand the import of the work without the need to bark, pounce on isolated words, whisper and whimper which Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, the leading contemporary interpreter of the cycle, finds appropriate to this and everything else he sings — which is to say everything. All the qualities still on display in Hotter's master-classes are equally apparent in his singing.

Alas, Fenelope Turing shows no qualifications for writing helpfully about Hotter. She has produced a chatty account of his life, with

than the day on which J. P. Souse's *Christ and the Wonderful Lamp* was given its premiere. A chronology stretching from, say, *Tristan und Isolde* to *Pierrot Lunaire* might have some coherence; 1900 to 1979 does not. Nicolas Slonimsky's unbalanced and facetious introduction compounds the fallacy with some extraordinarily naïve statements, such as that "the 20th Century marked a revolution in the style and technique of musical composition greater than in any century before"; that "until the very end of the 19th Century the unbreakable rule of composition was that each separate, individual section, each movement and certainly the complete work itself has to terminate on a perfect triad"; and most misleading of all, as if denying thousands of years of developing musical praxis, that "on the threshold of the 20th Century the musical ground began to shift".

Nor does the rigidity of the headings do anything much. "Orchestral" is awkwardly distinguished from "Instrumental and Vocal", while "Births, Deaths, and Debuts" get prominence unwarranted by their significance as musical occasions — does anyone really need to know that "mezzo-soprano Gladys Swarthout" was born in Deepwater, Missouri, on December 25, 1900? The "Related Events" section is particularly weak, including for example the temporary closure of the Imperial Open House in Petrograd (owing to winter weather conditions) but failing to notice the beginning of the BBC's sponsorship of the Proms or Boulez's appointment to IRCAM.

Burbank deadens his book further by sticking firmly (and without an initial apology for his limitations of scope) to the accepted parameters of "serious" or "classical" music. In an era of exceptional fluidity and internationalism, there is virtually nothing about music east of the Soviet Union or south of Europe, only the bare minimum of jazz, and a total exclusion of pop and rock music.

The lack of substance and flexibility of structure is far more disabling than the inevitable quota of mistakes and omissions (Shostakovich and Rawsthorne apparently alive and well in 1979, Marie Collier taking singing lessons from Melba between birth and her second birthday, *Aida* still being written for the opening of the Suez Canal). As such books go, this one comes off as pretty scrupulous, although the complete lack of accents or diacritical marks in the text is deplorable. (Here, as in so many other respects, Michael Kennedy's *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music* is authoritative.)

It all amounts to a regrettably wasted opportunity. Music history desperately needs new perspectives, a worked-out sociology, and a much stronger sense of the relationship between composition and the institutions of patronage and performance. Richard Burbank has ended by doing little more than ferreting out an enormous amount of previously obscure material and dumping it on the reader in the least imaginative or helpful way.

many an unilluminating anecdote, innumerable errors of fact (on page 128, for instance, she says that Clemens Krauss conducted *Parzifal* in Bayreuth in 1955, whereas actually he died in 1954; three lines later she says that Böhm conducted *Parzifal* in 1965, but it was André Cluytens: Böhm never conducted the work at Bayreuth; the book is all like that), work at Bayreuth; the book is all like that), painting clichés, everything in the style of a gossip-column. The only interesting and valuable parts of the book are those considerable stretches where she got Hotter (Hans to her) to talk about his life and work, and even those could have been better if the questions had been more pointed; she seems simply to have asked him to reminisce, and so he has no prompting to say anything specific about particular roles or artists.

*Lieder: An introduction to German Song* (203pp. Julia MacRae. £12.99, 0 86033 122 7) by Kenneth Whilston, with a foreword by Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, has recently been published. It is in four parts: "The Development of the German Lied", "Performer and Audience", "Twenty-Five Popular Lieder", "Ground and Performance" and "Lieder of the

# Unstopping recollections

## James Kirkup

KENZABURO OE (Editor)  
Atomic Aftermath: Short stories about  
Hiroshima and Nagasaki  
213pp. Tokyo: Shueisha Press. ¥1200.  
4087730573

The stories in *Atomic Aftermath* are by both professional writers and those many victims of the A-bombs or their children — "second-generation survivors" — who have written agonizingly direct and truthful descriptions of their experiences in poems, essays, stories and autobiographies. Such untutored writings speak with the realism of the common people, and act as therapies and warnings. No one who reads Tamiki Hara's "Summer Flower" — a personal account of the devastation of Hiroshima on that fatal morning of August 6 — could ever deny the folly of our present arms race: the bombs that fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki

were playthings compared with the monsters being stockpiled today. Katsuzo Oda's "Human Ashes" is a similar account of that day in Hiroshima, almost unbearable in its realism, and related with the kind of helpless horror and indignation perhaps possible only in a non-professional writer uninfluenced by preconceived notions about how such events should be artistically described. Indeed, it is their lack of art, in the traditional sense, that makes these writers unforgettable, for the intensity of their suffering has not made them blind to the universal significance of that primal vision of man's inhumanity to man.

The stories by the professionals are no less striking, though in a completely different vein, with a literary self-consciousness that tends to make them feel rather lightweight. Masuji Ibuse's "The Crazy Iris" and Kyoko Hayashi's "The Empty Can" are among the best. But the most poignant and bitter of them, in a Japan where discrimination and class-consciousness

## Unmeeting summits

### Oliver Bowcock

KOSUKE KOYAMA  
Mount Fuji and Mount Sinai: A pilgrimage in  
theology  
273pp. SCM Press. Paperback, £6.50.  
0334010543

Kosuke Koyama is a professor at Union Theological Seminary in New York. A Japanese, baptized into the Christian faith during the Second World War, shortly before the fire-bomb raids on Tokyo, he is well placed to compare the two cultures presented in this book. His "pilgrimage" charts a journey from the spiritual and aesthetic tradition of Mount Fuji to the theologically exigent one of Sinai. It concludes with a fundamentalist Christian commitment.

This use of mountains as symbols is typical of the somewhat glib way in which Koyama reviews his subject. A result of this simplification is an occasionally patronizing tone and an uneven fabric to the book. Copious Old Testament references are juxtaposed with jazzy American phrases, and the argument mixes the esoteric with the banal. Koyama aims to de-

monstrate an involved faith (he emphasizes the "impassioned" nature of God in human affairs), but the effect is unfortunate. Shortly put, he attempts too much. His own experience has led him through cultural terrains vaster than those of most of his readers; extensive exposition of both Japanese and Christian traditions is inevitable. Good autobiography tells the author's experiences and may leave the reader with a final impression of moral opinions. In *Mount Fuji and Mount Sinai* the process has been reversed: Koyama dwells upon the philosophy and only conveys hints of a life being lived. A pilgrimage, even one in theology, is active as well as spiritual.

Consequently the book is thought-provoking rather than convincing, though considerations within it certainly demand attention. Koyama sees the Japanese government before the Second World War as idolatrous; perverting the strict structure of Confucian rule to suit its own ends. An idolatrous nation, he argues, is one which enforces the combination of sacrifice by its people and oppression of others to consolidate the country's position. This is an accusation that some, despite Nakasone's foreign policy changes and the much-vaunted peace clause in the Constitution, would still level at Japan today. The logical conclusion of

take so many forms, is Mitsuharu Inoue's "The House of Hands", about the pitiless discrimination against "the never-stop people" — A-bomb victims who never stop bleeding, and for whom marriage, that most sacred of all Japan's stultifying conventions, is out of the question. The story opens with an epigraph giving the words of an anonymous countrywoman from a village in Nagasaki Prefecture: "Nobody's going to marry those Nagasaki girls . . . Those people are outcasts — damned Untouchables."

The editor, Kenzaburo Oe, has made a discriminating choice in this anthology, illustrated by gritty documentary photographs and reproductions from the haunting "Hiroshima Panels" of Iri and Toshi Maruki, the only works of artistic distinction in the Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima. The translations, by Burton Watson, John Bester, David L. Swain, George Saito and others, are stylish and carry conviction.

Koyama's argument is that the atomic bombings were a judgment of God upon the Japanese; he halts only just before making such a controversial statement.

His approach to the subject of atomic weapons, however, displays a deeper sensitivity. It is interesting that he considers these views of his as tempered by Buddhism and its cyclical view of history. He sees the Western (specifically American) approach to nuclear arms as confrontational and as ignoring God's involvement in human affairs. President Reagan (quoted in the book) holds the West to be free and good, with the corollary of Russia's being tyrannical and evil. This allows no scope for the idea of history as a record of God's, as well as human, experience. Koyama's hypothesis is that if Reagan is correct, and the atomic stockpiles are as high as we are told, then God is probably dead.

There are flashes of stimulating thought in the book; its flaws arise from Koyama's inability to exploit fully his own territory — for this, perhaps, one needs to look to the Japanese Catholic writer Shusaku Endo (whose latest volume of short stories is reviewed on p 1223 of this issue). It demonstrates nevertheless an ardent, engaged theological concern and an unusual involvement of East and West.

## AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 197  
Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than November 16. A prize of £20 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that the most nearly correct.

Enclaves, marked "Author, Author 197" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX.

1 It was the morning of my hundredth birthday. I shaved the final mirror-disc of old tired face under the merciless glare of the bathroom lighting. . . . I dabbed a soda-slick at the razor nicks. In the magnifying mirror it looked like a white rocket landing on the uncharted side of the moon.  
2 He had almost forgotten what it was like to shave with a new blade, having — for nearly a year now — used the old ones stacked up by the previous tenant on top of the bathroom cupboard. This morning he stashed his cheeks, underlip, and Adam's apple: shaving-soap froth became childhood ice-cream sprinkled with raspberry vinegar.  
3 My Adam's apple is a prickly pear: Now I shall speak of evil and despair.  
As none has spoken. Five, six, seven, eight. Nine strokes are not enough. Ten. I pulpste Through strawberry-and-cream the gory mess And find unchanged that patch of prickliness.

Competition No 193  
Winner: Dan Jacobson  
Answers:

1 I've heard it said that Daisy's mummur was only to make people lean towards her; an irrelevant criticism that made it no less charming.  
2 Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, chapter 1. She had the softest voice that ever was heard; and her nose, stupendously aquiline, had a little knob in the very centre or keystone of the bridge.  
3 Charles Dickens, *Dombey and Son*, chapter 1. Her voice ever soft, gentle, and low, an excellent thing in woman! Shakespeare, *King Lear*, V. iii.

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